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MARCH 2009  
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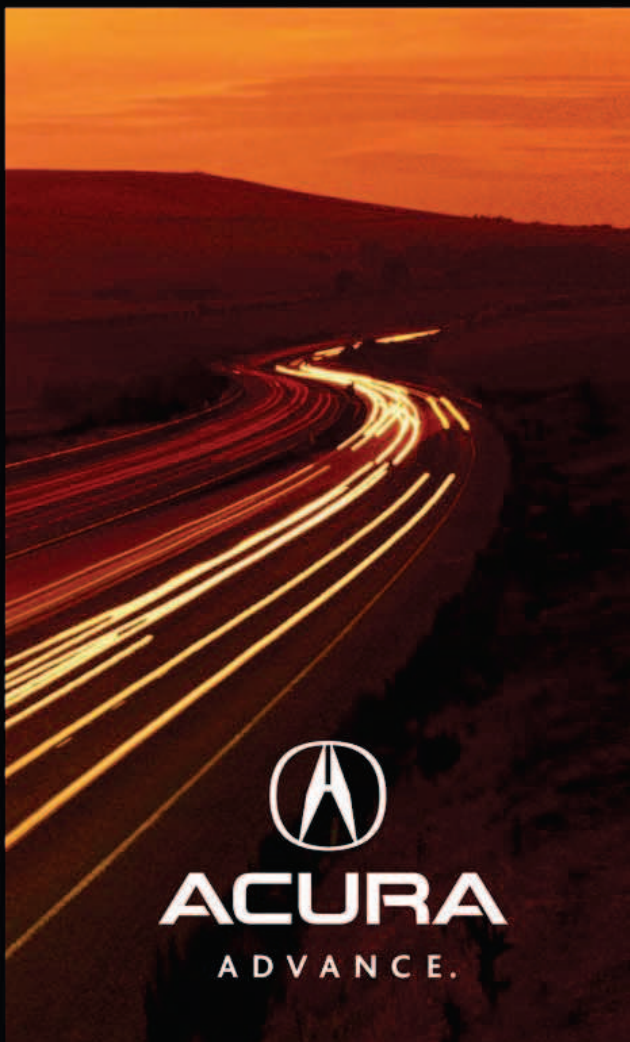
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# SAVEUR



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## COVER

*Hawaiian-style kalbi.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIE BLACHÈRE

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*Helfrich family, McKenzie River, Oregon*





## THE OREGON FISHINGPERSON

IN OTHER WORDS, A HUMAN BEING BORN WITH A PAIR OF OARS  
IN ONE HAND AND A FLY ROD IN THE OTHER AND A THRILL-  
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There are many wild rivers in Oregon where the fish still glimmer and romp in large numbers, not afraid of us humans, because they have been whispered to in just the right way by old Mr. Helfrich and his sons and grandsons and granddaughters and nephews and nieces these past hundred years. And that seems to make a difference. So if you are a human who enjoys the thrill of the chase and the mystery of the rapids and bald eagles and—by some miracle—the absence of bloodthirsty insects, start planning your Oregon fishing getaway at [traveloregon.com](http://traveloregon.com) or by calling 1-800-547-7842.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY 2ND LT. GREGORY A. WOLF, USMC

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# This Month at SAVEUR.COM

This month at SAVEUR.COM you'll find a guide to eating out in Atlantic City, New Jersey; a collection of the best Italian-American recipes from the SAVEUR archives; tips for the home baker; cooking with Mexican cotija cheese; simple recipes for Mississippi-style hush puppies and fried artichokes; a photo slide show inside Demel, one of Vienna's finest pastry shops; and many other exclusive online features.

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### Skinny Dip Cheddar Fondue

Makes 6 appetizer or 4 main-course servings

2/3 cup low-fat (1%) milk

1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled

1 dried bay leaf

1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Pinch grated nutmeg

4 ounces **Cabot 50% Reduced Fat Cheddar**, grated

2 cups raw broccoli florets

4 large carrots, peeled and cut into spears

1/2 pint cherry tomatoes

1 pound small new potatoes, cooked

1 In medium saucepan, whisk together milk and cornstarch until cornstarch is completely dissolved (tilt pan to check for any remaining lumps). Add garlic, bay leaf, mustard and nutmeg.

2 Place pan over medium-low heat.

Whisking constantly, bring mixture to simmer; continue whisking for 1 minute.

3 Add cheese and whisk just until cheese is melted and smooth. Remove from heat, discard bay leaf and transfer mixture to fondue pot or place saucepan on warming tray. Serve surrounded with vegetables for dunking.

**Nutrition Analysis:** Calories 112, Total Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 320mg, Carbohydrates 13g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 8g, Calcium 190mg. Based on 6 servings.

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# FIRST

## Change Is Good

Honoring the recipes in *SAVEUR* means giving them room to grow

**W**E'VE MADE SOME CHANGES. We didn't do it because we like messing with a good thing; we did it because we're always striving to make a good thing even better. You might not notice the difference at first, but take a closer look at any of the articles in this issue's feature section, and you'll see that we've given our recipes more room to breathe. Instead of placing each in its own, self-contained box alongside the words and pictures of the story—a format that has been standard in *SAVEUR* since it debuted, back in 1994—we've given the recipes their own section at the end of each feature article.

Why the break from tradition? The answer to that question, really, lies in our test kitchen. That's where every recipe in *SAVEUR* is developed and refined, where our kitchen director, Hunter Lewis, and our executive food editor, Todd Coleman, along with the rest of the kitchen staff, go through the often messy but always gratifying process of making the same dish over and over again until it looks and tastes right. Every step of the way, they take notes, recording how many times they stirred the ingredients braising slowly in a pot, how deeply they scored a cut of meat before marinating it, how long they toasted the whole spices before grinding them for a curry. Then, when they finally arrive at perfection, Hunter and Todd sit down to write the recipes.

Writing a recipe is demanding work; just like any other kind of writing, it requires thoughtful

phrasing, consistency, and rigorous editing. "Add stock to skillet and boil" will not get the cook following those instructions the same results as "Slowly add stock, whisking to remove browned bits from bottom of skillet, and bring to a gentle boil". Over the past few years, though, we have found ourselves more and more challenged in our mission to give readers thorough instructions that are easy to follow and a pleasure to use and that can teach readers something interesting.

The source of the problem? It was, often, those little recipe boxes. While we loved that they allowed the recipes to live in the heart of the story, too frequently we had to trim away valuable words to make the text fit inside them. Sure, the instructions worked fine, but the recipes were losing something in the process.

So, we editors huddled with our art director, David Weaver, and tweaked the design. And tweaked it some more. And then a little more. What we came up with is contained in

this issue. It's still a work in progress, but now, in their new home at the end of each article, those recipes can tell an even richer story than before. There's room for extra cooking tips, wine pairing notes, food-shopping suggestions, and all sorts of other content about preparing and serving the foods described in the article.

So, read, savor, and get cooking! Meanwhile, we'll keep working to make sure those recipes, and everything else in the magazine, are the best they can be. —JAMES OSELAND, Editor-in-Chief



Kitchen assistant Judy Haubert tests a recipe.





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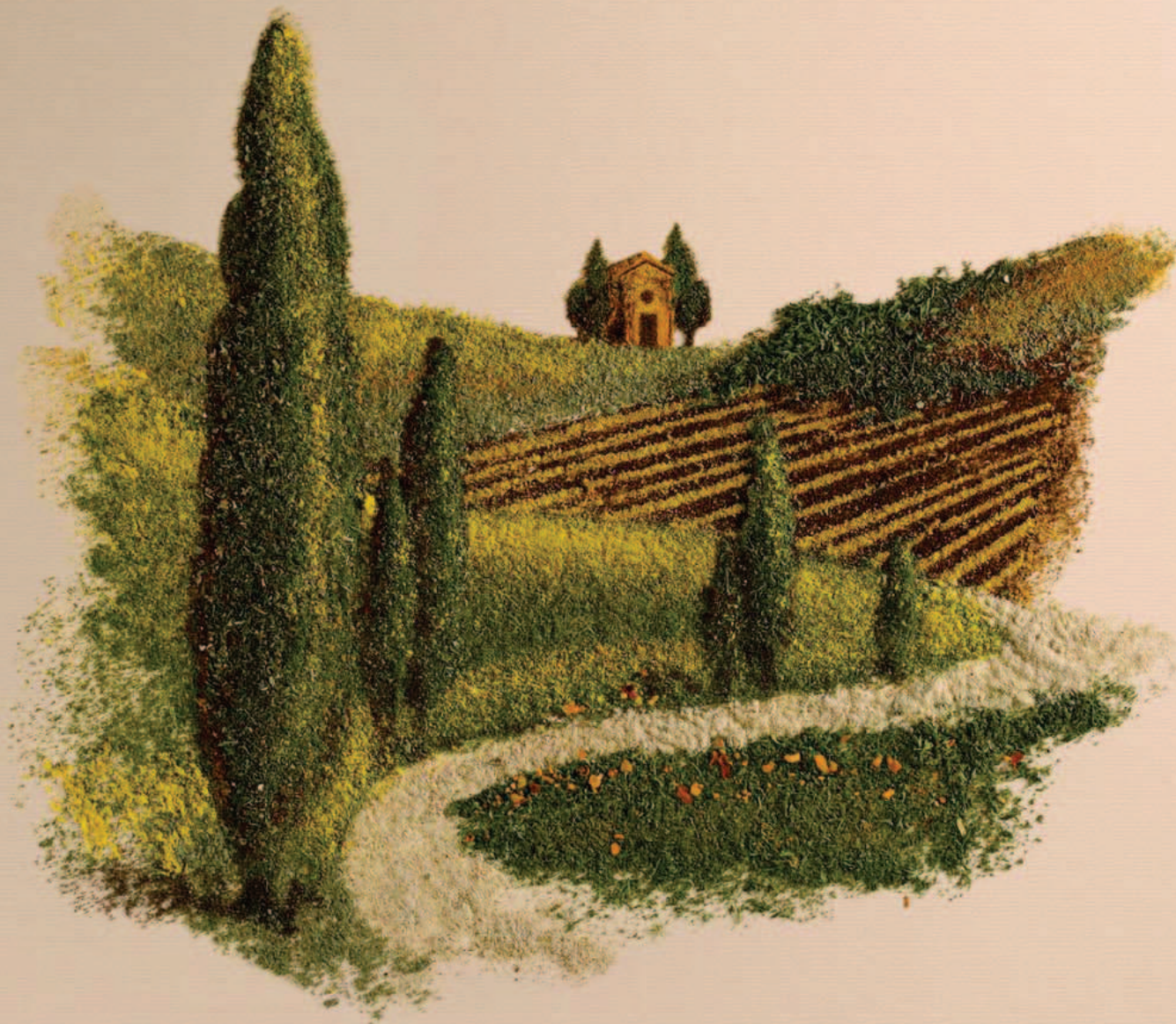


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# FARE

Memories and Marvels from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More



## Old Rascal

**T**O ME, THE Rascal House was the Promised Land. It was Oz. Wonderland. It was a perpetually raised glass for the Hebrew toast “L’chaim”—“To life”.

To more-objective observers, the Rascal House was just a deli; okay, a great deli, maybe even the best deli in the world, but basically a place to get a good whitefish salad. Still, we’re all mourning it. The corner of 172nd Street and Collins Avenue in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, is now a fancy gourmet food store. After 54 years, Miami’s best Jewish deli converted. It closed in March of last year.

The Rascal House—Wolfie Cohen’s Rascal House, as its neon sign stated, referring to the deli man who opened it in 1954—was the place where I felt the most Jewish and the most American. At first glance, when I was a young woman in the 1960s, I shuddered at its aqua exterior, but I soon became enamored of it, along with the blond wood paneling and red upholstery inside. When my parents moved to Miami for their winters, the Rascal House became the first and last stops on my visits, and after my parents died, in the late 1980s, it became a reason in itself for a trip to the city. There were always long lines. This was the

ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI



## FARE

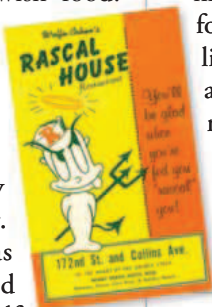
only restaurant where my father, the epitome of impatience, was willing to wait. I never told him that I actually loved waiting in line there. That's where I observed, as waiters waltzed by bearing platters of food, what my all-American, Maryland hometown couldn't teach me about Jewish food.

The portions were gargantuan, from the six-inch-high meringue pies to pastрами sandwiches that were so tall they tended to flop over. The matzo ball was only half submerged in soup, and the "half grapefruit" was really a whole one with the top lopped off. When we eventually took our seats, the table was covered with bowls of pickles and slaw. Any bare spots were soon filled with house-made rolls that everyone took home in doggie bags. Those rolls probably still sit in freezers across south Florida today; I'm waiting for them to go on sale on eBay.

Rascal House was every Jewish holiday at once. Any day of the year I could order Hanukkah's latkes, Passover's macaroons, and the blintzes with which we broke our Yom Kippur fast. Photos on the walls attested to Frank Sinatra's and Jackie Gleason's having been customers. But I was more interested in the habits of everyday patrons. What did they drink with their dinner? What—or whom—did they talk about? I marveled at the dress codes. Men wore warm-up suits in tropical colors we didn't see up North. Women counterbalanced them with fussy discomforts: platform

shoes, teased and tinted helmets of hair, and an hour's worth of makeup.

I also noticed the numbers tattooed on tanned wrists. Eventually, I began to see Rascal House as not only a living museum of Jewish-American cooking but also a kind of cultural halfway house for Jews who had started their lives in pre-Holocaust Europe and ended them in Miami. It made me joyful to find these survivors chattering with their families. It reminded me that the ordinary is cause for celebration. —Phyllis Richman



### RASCAL HOUSE WHITEFISH SALAD

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

We love this creamy salad (shown on previous page) on a toasted bagel half, topped with tomato and onion slices.

- 1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 lb. smoked whitefish or trout, skinned, bones removed
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 tbsp. chopped dill
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 hard-boiled egg, finely chopped
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

① Place the chopped onions in a bowl and cover them with cold water. Let the onions soak to mellow their bite, about 15 minutes. Strain and set aside.

② Use a fork to flake the fish into a bowl. Add onion, mayonnaise, sour cream, dill, lemon juice, egg, and celery. Stir to combine and season with pepper. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to 4 days.



## A Sweet History

**G**LANCE IN THE other direction while driving west on Route N111 in central Portugal, and you just might miss the tiny village of Tentúgal. Composed of a cluster of quiet, winding streets, Tentúgal (population 2,275) is suffering the same fate as many rural Portuguese towns: during the past half century, younger residents have up and left for larger cities. One native, however, returned, determined to revive Tentúgal's illustrious gastronomic past, one pastry at a time.

Olga Alexandre Gonçalves Cavaleiro, 37, is the owner of O

Afonso, a pastry shop dedicated to preserving the pastéis de tentúgal, a crisp-shelled, finger-long sweet filled with doce de ovos, a mixture of egg yolks, sugar, and water. Portugal has a rich tradition, in both the religious and the caloric sense, when it comes to desserts. "Since everyone had chickens years ago," says Cavaleiro, "eggs were offered as a tithe to convents and monasteries, and they had to do something with the yolks." (Legend has it that the whites were used to starch nuns' wimples.) The result is a grand array of egg-laden *doces conventuais* (convent sweets), such as the pas-

(instead of beet alcohol) infused with 11 herbs and spices, including star anise, riccola mint, and tarragon. Contrary to rumor, wormwood, an herb that all absinthes contain, doesn't cause hallucinations or madness, though given the spirit's 120 proof, diluting with water—which turns the liquid opaque and releases its aromatic oils—is a good idea. —Karen Shimizu



**ONE GOOD BOTTLE** Many absinthes are harsh, but St. George Spirits Absinthe Verte (\$75), made in Alameda, California, is anything but. Our favorite of the many newly available absinthes (U.S. regulations prohibited the spirit's sale until 2007), it owes its unusual mellowness to a base of a brandy



## FARE



**A baker in Tentúgal, Portugal, stretches dough to make pastries, top. Above, pastéis de tentúgal.**

téis, which was first created at the town's Convento do Nossa Senhora do Carmo in the 16th century.

"What makes pastéis de tentúgal so interesting," Cavaleiro adds, "is how they're made, which hasn't changed in almost 500 years." A nine-pound lump of dough, consisting of nothing but flour and

water, is plopped down in the middle of a white cotton sheet spread over the floor of an immaculately clean room, presided over by bakers wearing pristine white uniforms and socks. Then, an unpredictable dance ensues, governed variously by humidity, temperature, and time of year. A baker grabs an edge of the dough, fans it out until it falls to the floor in a slightly oblong shape, and moves around the perimeter of the dough, fanning and flopping some more until the sheet gets larger and thinner. Next, a second baker grabs another edge of the dough and repeats the same actions. This pavane of pulling and flopping causes the dough to be stretched to a diameter of up to 300 square feet; it becomes so thin and sheer that a newspaper can be read through it. Finally, the bakers cut the sheets into small circles, which they will roll around the egg yolk filling before baking. The result is a pastry of extraordinary complexity, with a thin, crisp crust that shatters when bitten into, giving way to a rich, creamy center.

To the people of Tentúgal, the pastries are more than a mere sweet. They've come to define the town's identity and culinary tradition. To protect that heritage, Cavaleiro recently founded the Associação de Pasteleiros de Tentúgal, a task force that, among other things, ensures that the namesake pastries may be made only in that village. Cavaleiro and company have also just finished petitioning the Ministry of Agriculture in Lisbon, the capital, to be granted the coveted Indicação Geográfica Protegida, a governmental certification that guarantees the link between a region and its products. Once the IGP insignia adorns the boxes from the six shops that currently make the pastéis, Cavaleiro hopes, Tentúgal will become more than a blink-and-miss-it town. The wish is that tourists driving by will stop and eat. —David Leite

## AGENDA

MARCH

2

Birthday:

**THEODORE SEUSS GEISEL***Springfield, Massachusetts, 1904*

Dr. Seuss, the creator of what may be the most famous fictional meal ever—green eggs and ham—said that he drew inspiration for his children's verse from his mother's unique bedtime ritual. Having worked in her father's bakery, Mrs. Geisel developed rhymes for remembering the pies' names, which she chanted to Seuss in place of stories.



MARCH

7

**CRAB AND FENNEL FEST***Santa Rosa, California*

The sixth annual Crab and Fennel Fest, hosted by Russian River Valley Winegrowers, celebrates two local spring ingredients that taste great together: fresh dungeness crab from the nearby Pacific coast and fennel. Chefs fuse the two in salads, slaw, focaccia, and pasta dishes and serve the meal with pours from 60 local wineries. Information: [www.rvvw.org/crab-fennel-fest](http://www.rvvw.org/crab-fennel-fest).



MARCH

9

Anniversary:

**END OF GUERRA DE LOS PASTELES (PASTRY WAR), 1939**

In 1928, war began when Mexican soldiers damaged a French pastry shop in Mexico City. Within weeks, the French government, which claimed that French citizens had lost property in Mexico since the country gained independence, seized the Mexican army. After a decade, Mexico paid 600,000 pesos to the chef, and France withdrew.

MARCH

13–21

**PENANG INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL***Penang, Malaysia*

Sample dozens of local specialties, including rojak (a sweet and savory salad of tropical fruits) and assam laksa (an aromatic, tamarind-based fish noodle soup) at this weeklong celebration of Penang's foodways—an amalgam of Indian, Chinese, and indigenous Malay ingredients. Information: [www.visitpenang.gov.my](http://www.visitpenang.gov.my).

MARCH

27–28

**SMOKIN' BLUES AND BBQ CHALLENGE***Hammond, Louisiana*

For the fifth year in a row, more than 100 teams from the Kansas City Barbecue Society will come together in Hammond, Louisiana, to compete in the largest barbecue event in the state. Pit masters put their 'cue expertise to the test in four categories: chicken, pork ribs, brisket, and pulled pork. Information: [www.hammondbluesandbbq.com](http://www.hammondbluesandbbq.com).





## Cutting Edge

ON A RECENT VISIT to Mumbai, I was captivated by the extraordinary selection of handmade kitchen knives available from mobile vendors, like the man pictured in this photo, and at market stalls, where artisans sharpened carbon-steel knives at spinning whetstones and fitted blades with handles fashioned from wood, metal, and plastic. Some of the blades were painted, which helped to prevent rust; others had a hole for hanging; and still others were secured to their handles with tightly wound wire. Lyla Bavadam, a Mumbai-based journalist, told us that some of these *chakkuwallahs* (knife sellers) travel door-to-door, offering their wares for as little as 40 rupees (about a dollar) apiece; they also sharpen knives on a whetstone affixed to their carts. While professional cooks in India may own specific knives designed for different purposes, such as ones with long, thin, and flexible blades, which are perfect for slicing vegetables, most home cooks employ a single all-purpose knife. I bought a few knives from this particular vendor and have taken to using them for all sorts of tasks; they serve as a reminder that kitchen implements need not be expensive to perform beautifully and feel good in our hands. —*Todd Coleman*







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## FARE

**W**HEN I WAS living and teaching in the eastern Russian port of Vladivostok during the early 1990s, I spent many a weekend riding the Trans-Siberian railroad, that historic stretch of Russian track that spans nearly 6,000 miles between Moscow and the city I called home. Not only was it a delightful way to travel, but in a country that reaches across two continents and 11 time zones, it was often the *only* way to travel from place to place without a car. The one downside was the food: I quickly learned to avoid the grungy dining cars with their monotonous meals of mystery meat and mashed potatoes. Savvy Russian travelers packed their own fare or dashed outside when the train had pulled in to the station to purchase dishes—pirozhki (savory meat pies), say, or fresh poppy-seed buns—from local vendors, usually elderly women who transported their wares to the train platforms on sleds (in the winter) or in baby carriages (in the summer).

Fast-forward to the summer of 2007, when I was a lecturer on a Trans-Siberian railroad tour organized by National Geographic Expeditions. The last thing I expected to encounter on that



## A Table with a View

trip was fine dining. And yet, on the first night, I was seated at a linen-draped table and served an appetizer of cold sturgeon, smoked salmon, boiled shrimp, and black caviar. Waiters wearing bow ties filled our crystal glasses with dry Russian sparkling wine.

Having studied Russian history, I knew that this ramped-up menu was not a novelty but a comeback story. When the Trans-Siberian railroad was built, between 1891 and 1916, it was the longest railway in the world, and many of its dining cars represented the height

of sophistication, allowing voyagers to savor their journey in style. But World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the ensuing Russian Civil War changed all that. During the next seven decades under communism, food service on the trains was nothing to write home about.

Over the past decade, however, as tourism has increased across the former Soviet Union, the experience of dining on the rails is enjoying a renaissance. In 2007, G+W Travel, a British company that runs tourist trains in Russia, introduced the Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express, the train on which I'd been hired as a lecturer. The \$25 million private luxury train includes two elegant dining cars and a modern kitchen car where chefs turn out classic Russian specialties, like buckwheat blini, Ukrainian borscht, seafood salads, and Siberian pel'meni dumplings. What's more, the ingredients couldn't be fresher: each time the train pulls in to the station, chefs hop off to stock the larder. What a way to eat local, at 75 miles per hour! —Sharon Hudgins

THE PANTRY, page 96: *Information about Tentúgal's sweets, absinthe, and dining by rail.*

## RIDE AND DINE

To dine on real food while watching the world glide by is one of the great thrills of train travel. In 1923, the English writer G. K. Chesterton compared the experience to the "pleasure of picnics... [having] a character adapted to its abnormal and almost adventurous conditions". Though many long-distance train companies started doing away with fancy dining cars when air travel became more accessible, the ones featured here still nobly uphold or have reintroduced the tradition. —Jayanthi Daniel



While sitting under the domed glass ceiling of the **Napa Valley Wine Train's** dining car, passengers feast on dishes like polenta with mushroom ragoût, paired with wines from vineyards along the train's route.

You can taste your way across Canada aboard **VIA Rail's Silver and Blue** service, which travels from Toronto to Vancouver and serves Canadian wines with the likes of local Albertan prime rib and smoked trout.



The **Alaska Railroad Denali Star** serves up breathtaking views of Mount McKinley, as well as Alaska salmon with cranberry vinaigrette, smoked salmon chowder, and reindeer sausage.

Since 1832, the **Strasburg Rail Road** has traversed Pennsylvania's Amish country. Its popular dining car offers regional favorites, including baked ham and shoofly pie (a molasses-based dessert).



The **Danube Express** travels from Brussels to Budapest and Istanbul. Designed to evoke the bygone glories of train travel, it has luxe fare, with dishes like grilled pork medallions with dauphinois potatoes.



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# CELLAR

## Pioneer Spirit

A winemaking renaissance is taking place in an unlikely corner of California

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSH WAND

**W**HEN I WAS growing up in Santa Barbara, California, a few decades ago, dozens of vineyards had recently been planted in the surrounding hills, and local wines were starting to flood the markets. My parents, like most area residents, were enthusiastic supporters of this new industry, and I came of age drinking those wines. The ones I remember were big and oaky, like most California wines at the time. Anything but subtle, they hardly seemed to reflect the nuanced environment in which the grapes were grown: a vintner's wonderland of microclimates made possible by Santa Barbara County's unique locale, on a sharply curving stretch of the California coast where vast ranges of foothills and valleys are bathed alternately in fog coming off the ocean and hot air rolling in from the deserts to the east.

A few years ago, however, after I'd left California for New York, I started to find wines from Santa Barbara County that were nothing like those I used to drink. There were bright, strikingly crisp sauvignon blancs; supple, Old World-style pinot noirs; inky and complex syrahs; and even some excellent wines made from grapes I hadn't known were being grown in California, like tocai friulano and nebbiolo. I noticed something else that was surprising: some of the best of those wines—including ones of which I'd been reading effusive reviews—were coming from Lompoc, a small city that most Californians, if they'd heard of it at all, associated with the nearby federal prison and air force base.

Soon, my father and other people I knew back in Santa Barbara were talking excitedly about something called the Lompoc Wine Ghetto, an area on the edge of that town where a cluster of wineries had opened, one right next to the other. Intrigued, I decided to visit a Lompoc winemaker named Steve Clifton; his two wineries, Palmina and Brewer-Clifton, had been earning praise from the likes of



**Clockwise from top left, scenes from the Lompoc Wine Ghetto: Steve Clifton of Brewer-Clifton and Palmina wineries; a winemakers' lunch in the Santa Rita Hills; a mural in downtown Lompoc; Chad Melville of Samsara Wine; Kris Curran, the former winemaker at Sea Smoke; sorting bins outside Stolpman winery; a vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills; the entrance to the industrial park that houses the Lompoc Wine Ghetto; decanted wines in the tasting room at Palmina.**

the wine writer Robert Parker, who, back in 2001, declared Brewer-Clifton wines his "single greatest revelation" of the year.

When I arrived on a bright fall day at the address Clifton had given me for Palmina

Wines, I was sure I'd come to the wrong place. After driving past miles of steep vineyards and hilly grazing lands, I ended up at an industrial park, gazing at rows of prefabricated gray-and-blue steel warehouses. Palmina looked more



## CELLAR

like a place to buy office carpet than a winery, but when I walked inside, it was clear I'd come to the right place: workers were busily picking through freshly delivered grapes, readying them to be loaded into a crushing machine.

I found Clifton, a boyishly handsome 44-year-old, peering into a steel tank of freshly pressed juice. As he showed me around, he explained that his other winery, where he and his business partner, Greg Brewer, make single-vineyard chardonnays and pinot noirs, was just a few yards away in a larger but otherwise identical building. And beyond that building were the 27 other wineries that occupied the ghetto, all housed in similar spaces.

"Having other winemakers right next door

is one of the best things about this place," Clifton told me. "When you're off by yourself in a winery on a vineyard, you don't get as much of a chance to taste other people's wine. You get tunnel vision—in the industry they call it cellar blindness—and you start thinking that your wines taste good because they're all you're used to. Here, we taste wines together all the time, and it gives me a much better yardstick for how my wines are doing."


The communal spirit of the Lompoc Wine Ghetto is in some ways the result of the fact that Santa Barbara was for many years overlooked as a wine region. It wasn't until the 1970s, long after Napa and Sonoma had become well-regarded viticultural areas, that a few intrepid

**WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE PALMINA WINERY, HOUSED IN AN INDUSTRIAL PARK MADE UP OF IDENTICAL STEEL WAREHOUSES, I WAS SURE I'D COME TO THE WRONG PLACE**

Clifton and Greg Brewer followed a year later.

"Lompoc is a really unique situation," Steve Clifton explained. "It's the only incorporated city in the area, so they were able to make their permitting process easier than it is anywhere else in the county, and they've also helped set up the utilities you need to run a winery." The city's incentives worked, and soon more than a dozen wineries set up shop in the industrial park, most of them run by young vintners who had little money (Brewer-Clifton was started with \$12,000) and who had previously been working for other, more-established wineries or renting space in communal facilities. With ample and affordable space and an enhanced ability to control the winemaking process, Lompoc's vintners were free to pursue sometimes daring visions, and within a couple of years, a surprisingly large percentage of them were producing great wines.

Late in the day of my visit to Palmina, a handful of winemakers from the ghetto stopped by with some of their more recent wines. Clifton invited everyone to gather around a table in a room off the production area, and we started tasting. Rick Longoria opened his Cuvee Diana chardonnay, an apple-y, bright wine named for his wife; Victor Gallegos, the general manager of Sea Smoke Cellars, which has gained national renown in recent years, brought all three of the winery's pinot noirs: alluring, complex wines that have earned a cult following in California and beyond; and Chad Melville of

Samsara Wine and Sashi Moorman of Stolpman had both brought syrahs that, though made from grapes grown within ten miles of one another, were utterly different in both body and flavor. As for Steve Clifton, he introduced us to a bright, citrusy tocai friulano and a deep, nuanced nebbiolo. Each wine had as distinct a personality as those of the winemakers themselves, and I left Lompoc that day with the certainty that the wines being made in my fog- and sun-bathed native county were only going to get better and better. 

## TASTING NOTES

A wide variety of wines, made from grapes grown in Santa Barbara County, is produced in the Lompoc Wine Ghetto; here are some of our favorites. See **THE PANTRY**, page 96, for sources. —G.F.

**BREWER-CLIFTON MOUNT CARMEL CHARDONNAY 2007 (\$68).** This crisp chardonnay could masquerade as a sauvignon blanc, with its bright pear flavor and kick of lemony acidity.

**FIDDLEHEAD HAPPY CANYON SAUVIGNON BLANC 2006 (\$25).** Winemaker Kathy Joseph makes only pinot noir and sauvignon blanc, including this delicate wine, which offers hints of grapefruit and tropical fruit.

**LONGORIA STA. RITA HILLS FE CIEGA VINEYARD PINOT NOIR 2006 (\$40).** A robust cherry aroma with hints of gorgonzola cheese gives way to a darkly fruity, spicy, and slightly tannic flavor.

**PALMINA HONEA NEBBIOLO 2005 (\$70).** This wine, from a varietal usually grown in Italy's Piedmont region, delivers an intriguing earthy aroma and a well-balanced blend of black cherry and eucalyptus flavors.

**PIEDRASASSI SYRAH 2005 (\$55).** This deep, smoky, complex wine has jammy black currant flavors and a touch of woodsiness; it is made by Sashi Moorman of Stolpman Vineyards and Peter Hunken of Black Sheep Finds.

**SAMSARA MELVILLE VINEYARD SYRAH 2006 (\$40).** An inky, deep purple wine with a sweet, almost chocolatey nose and a flavor redolent of stone fruit and black pepper.

**SEA SMOKE "SOUTHING" PINOT NOIR 2006 (\$60).** This elegant pinot, one of three the winery makes, is the winemakers' favorite. With hints of smoke, oak, and red fruit, it is pleasingly balanced.

**STOLPMAN VINEYARDS SANGIOVESE 2006 (\$32).** Light but full-bodied with notes of resin, dried cranberries, and currants.



winemakers started up in this part of California. Grapes were already being grown in Santa Barbara County, but most were being sold to Napa and Sonoma wineries. And because much of the land in the county was parceled into large ranches, it was difficult for those pioneers to buy land and establish their own vineyards. So, they started making wine the way it has traditionally been made in places like Burgundy: by buying the fruit from trusted local growers and making the wine somewhere else nearby.

While most of Santa Barbara County benefited from the local wine boom, Lompoc, an unprepossessing town made up of low-slung single-family homes, didn't, at first. For nearly 70 years, the city's economy has depended on nearby Vandenburg Air Force Base, the Lompoc Federal Corrections Institution, and the area's cabbage and artichoke farms and cattle ranches. The city, however, happens to be located next to the Santa Rita Hills, the smallest and, in the opinion of some experts, most promising of the county's viticultural areas—a circumstance that wasn't lost on a Santa Barbara County winemaker named Rick Longoria, who moved the winemaking facilities for his Longoria Wines to an industrial park in Lompoc in 1998. Steve

**W** Profiles of Lompoc winemakers and tasting notes on more wines at [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE118](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE118)





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# INGREDIENT

## Pride of the Delta

In Mississippi the catfish is king, and farmers are determined to keep it that way

BY HUNTER LEWIS

**I**T WAS NEARING SIX o'clock on a Saturday night when I walked into Taylor Grocery, and that meant I was going to have to wait. After putting in my name for a table, I took a seat amid the crowd on the edge of the ramshackle wood porch, where people were lazing away the evening and looking out onto the main road of the tiny town of Taylor, Mississippi. The scene in the parking lot in front of this former country store looked like an Ole Miss tailgate party. Men sipped beers and Tennessee whiskey from Styrofoam cups. Dogs loped among rows of gleaming pickup trucks, more than a few of which had out-of-state plates.

I'd come, like everyone else, for the catfish. After an hour's wait, I sat down, and soon my prize emerged from the fryer piled on a plate with a lemon wedge, some tartar sauce, and a mound of hush puppies. I took a bite, and then another. Dusted in cornmeal flecked with black pepper, the golden filets had a satisfying crunch that gave way to delicate, sweet white flesh. I waited outside for the dinner rush to die down and, later, introduced myself to the cook, Brandon Hughes, a bearded man in his early 30s who was sporting a Social Distortion T-shirt. His right forearm bore a tattooed outline of Mississippi. "Catfish is to Mississippi what crawfish is to Louisiana," Hughes said as he lowered a fry basket full of cornmeal-dredged catfish into burbling peanut oil. "Everyone eats catfish here."

There are 28 species of catfish (so named because of its whiskers, or barbels, which the animal uses to search for food) indigenous to North America, and many others native to parts of Asia, where catfish is also prized, but it is *Ictalurus punctatus*, commonly called channel catfish, that is Hughes's medium and the catfish favored across the American South. The spiny-finned, fat-lipped omnivore may never win a beauty pageant, but no other American

fish can lay claim to such an enduring mythology as that of the channel catfish. In *Life on the Mississippi*, for example, Mark Twain wrote of seeing the river's "roaring demon", a catfish more than six feet long and weighing 250 pounds. And in his song "Rollin' Stone", Muddy Waters cast himself as a free-swimming catfish, an object of desire.

The fish Hughes was frying up at Taylor Grocery that day had never been swimming free along a river bottom, though. It came frozen in a box bearing the imprint of Heartland Catfish, a purveyor of farmed fish located in the Mississippi Delta. Indeed, a great majority of the channel catfish eaten these days in the United States is farm raised, and it may be the world's only widely consumed fish that tastes better from an industrial farm than when caught in the wild. Given the depletion of the ocean's fish stocks, this kind of sustainable aquaculture—the U.S. Catfish Industry has won accolades from organizations like the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program for safe farming practices—is no small thing. For cooks, the delicate, mild flavor of farm-raised channel catfish makes it a perfect canvas for a whole palette of flavors and a wide range of preparations, from rémoulade-smothered po'boys to fiery curries.

The fish I had in Taylor was a far cry from the catfish I grew up eating in my home state of North Carolina. I fished from the banks of a friend's pond and would fry the filets in a skillet, but no matter how much buttermilk and Tabasco I used, those catfish came out tasting, more often than not, like their muddy home. It's the muddy flavor of the wild-caught fish, coupled with the animal's homely appearance, that long ago gave catfish a reputation in many parts of the country as a trash fish. It's a misconception that a single bite of perfectly fried farmed channel catfish will instantly erase.

What makes farmed catfish taste better? Looking for answers, I drove from Taylor

southwest into the vast floodplain of the Mississippi Delta, the heart of the U.S. catfish industry. After entering Leflore County, in the center of the state, I passed mile after mile of five-foot-deep catfish ponds separated by levees wide enough to accommodate a pickup truck or a tractor.

Forty years ago along this flat stretch of high-

### FRIED CATFISH

SERVES 2

The cooks at Carmack Fish House in Vaiden, Mississippi, serve this dish (facing page) with tartar sauce and a side of hush puppies. For recipes for both those sides, go to [SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE118](http://SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE118).

#### Canola or peanut oil, for frying

- 2 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1/4 cup seasoned salt, such as Lawry's
- 2 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tbsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 4 3-5-oz. boneless, skinless catfish filets (see page 96)
- 1/2 lemon, cut into wedges
- Tartar sauce, for serving

① In an 8-qt. pot, pour in oil to a depth of 3". Heat oil over medium-high heat until it registers 350° on a deep-fry thermometer.

② Meanwhile, combine cornmeal, flour, seasoned salt, baking powder, and pepper in a large bowl. Add the catfish and toss to coat. Gently shake off the excess cornmeal mixture and transfer catfish to a rack.

③ Working in 2 batches, fry the catfish in the hot oil until golden brown and cooked through, about 6 minutes. Using tongs, transfer catfish to a wire cooling rack set over a rimmed baking sheet to let drain. Transfer fish to 2 plates and serve with a lemon wedge and tartar sauce.







## INGREDIENT

way, cotton was king. Cheaper cotton could be grown elsewhere, however, and the price of the other local cash crops, corn and soy, dropped, so Delta farmers dug ponds, flooding them with well water. In 1968 this fledgling venture yielded 12 million pounds of catfish. By 2003 as much as 650 million pounds was being harvested.

HEARTLAND CATFISH comprises two large processing facilities situated just off U.S. Highway 82 in the town of Itta Bena. In a small laboratory kitchen next to Heartland's loading zone, Stanley Marshall, Heartland's "flavor taster", greets me just as a farmer walks in with a two-pound live catfish in a plastic bag. Marshall, 52, clad in work boots, jeans, and a T-shirt, has what Richard Schweid, author of the excellent history *Catfish and the Delta* (Ten Speed Press, 1992), calls "a million-dollar tongue". Marshall has sampled more catfish than anyone else in the Delta and arguably more than anyone on Earth: some 250 fish a

day, five days a week, for the past 26 years.

Marshall sliced off the tail section from the farmer's fish, placed it in a Styrofoam hot dog container, and microwaved it for two minutes. As the farmer looked on with apprehension, Marshall raised a steaming forkful of the fish to his nose and inhaled, nodded with approval, and then took a bite. "It's on flavor," Marshall said, telling me that he had tasted fish from this particular farm three times already. He handed me a piece. "We're always looking for that mild, nutty, buttery-type flavor." The unseasoned fish had a mild, neutral flavor and aroma. If he'd detected the faintest smell of wet dirt, algae, or decaying leaves, the fish from this batch would not have been deemed ready for harvest. Relieved, the farmer unloaded his truck, some 2,850 pounds of sleek channel cats, and drove home with a payday of \$2,565.

Later that day I was seated in the cab of Bubba Cobb's pickup, watching from a levee as four workers in a small aluminum boat cor-

ralled nets to harvest catfish from a pond. A buyer for America's Catch, a Heartland competitor, Cobb drove us along muddy roads atop the levees, touring a handful of the company's approximately 490 ponds. The first step in keeping the fish's flavor pure is to train the bottom-feeding scavengers to feed not on the muddy pond bed but on the surface of the water. Dinner arrives with the sound of a mechanized blower, which tosses floating pellets of finely ground corn or soy into the pond. "When the fish hear that blower, it's like ringing the dinner bell," Cobb told me. The other crucial step is to maintain clean ponds. Like other freshwater fish, catfish hydrate themselves by absorbing water through their skin. If the pond contains muddy runoff or too much blue-green algae, the fish will take on that telltale muddy aroma and flavor.

As if the uphill battle against Mother Nature and snooty eaters weren't enough, the high cost of grain and fuel last summer, on top of foreign competition, forced many farmers to abandon fish altogether and return to growing soybeans. During my time in the Delta, the catfish farmers I talked with grumbled about the less regulated farmed catfish imported from Asia. They also talked a lot about something called delacata. Just as the Patagonian toothfish became Chilean sea bass, catfish too may be destined for an upgraded nomenclature. Later this year a small percentage of U.S. farm-raised catfish will be sold as filets labeled delacata. Processed from larger fish, the custom-cut filets will be more than twice the size of regular catfish filets and sold at a higher price. "Let's face it, 'catfish' is not the best name, especially for people outside of the South," says Jeremy Robbins, a marketer for the Catfish Institute, the industry group in charge of the makeover, which farmers hope will propel a fish with an inferiority complex beyond the deep-fried South and onto a bistrot menu near you.

I tried delacata at Giardina's, a white-tablecloth restaurant in Greenwood, Mississippi. The thick, 11-ounce pan-roasted filet was as buttery, mild, and delicious as a red snapper. If a change of name is what it takes to burnish this mighty fish's reputation, I said to myself as I swallowed another bite, more power to PR. Personally, I believe that Mark Twain uttered the best, or at least the most succinct, marketing tagline I can think of: "The catfish," he wrote in *Life on the Mississippi*, "is a plenty good enough fish for anybody." 🐟

## 6 Great Catfish Houses

Family-style fried-fish restaurants, often known as catfish houses, are fixtures across a broad swath of the American South. Call ahead before you make a pilgrimage: many rural catfish houses are open only on weekends. Here are six of our favorites. —Ben Mims



**Carmack Fish House 24973 Highway 35, Vaiden, Mississippi (662/289-5082).** This humble establishment, little known to outsiders, is a rural Southern treasure; it serves catfish that were raised in limestone ponds in eastern Mississippi and fries them up both as filets (pictured above) and as thick, meaty steaks. Make sure to try the tangy house-made coleslaw.

**Catfish Hole 4127 West Wedington Drive, Fayetteville, Arkansas (479/521-7008).** This popular eatery in western Arkansas sells more catfish than any other restaurant in

the state. The crisp breaded catfish filets come with excellent homemade hush puppies (a traditional Southern catfish side).

**Cowtown Cafe 20248 State Highway E, Bloomfield, Missouri (573/568-2250).** This 300-seat catfish oasis in the southeastern corner of Missouri has been around only since 1995, but it's already a regional institution. Try the tender fried catfish with the house's signature fried potatoes cooked with onions and bacon grease.

**Huck's 2811 South Trail Drive, Denison, Texas (903/337-0033).** The cornmeal-crusted catfish filets at this restaurant in North Texas are as good as any you'll get in the Mississippi Delta, and the Cajun shrimp and country fried steak are local favorites.

**Middendorf's 30160 Highway 51 South, Akers, Louisiana**

**(985/386-6666).** This 75-year-old Louisiana institution, damaged by Hurricane Ike last year but now back in business, is lauded across the South for its ultrathin, melt-in-your-mouth fried filets. Fresh local blue crab is added to the menu in the summer.

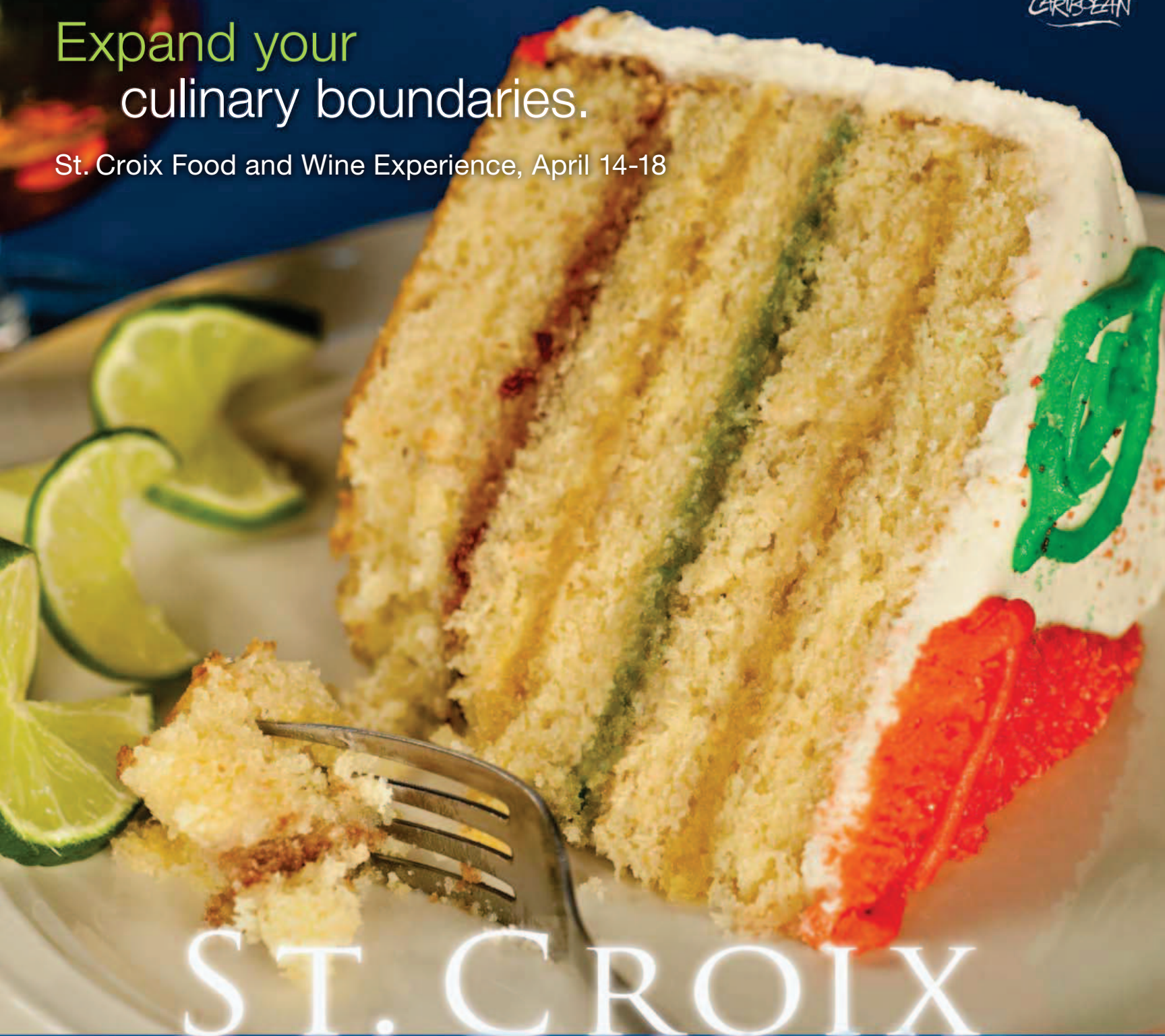


**Taylor Grocery 4 County Road 338 #A, Taylor, Mississippi (662/236-1716).** A former general store located eight miles south of Oxford, this catfish haven (above)—long a favorite of Ole Miss students—serves up luscious, crisp-tender cornmeal-crusted filets flecked with plenty of black pepper.



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# SOURCE

## Fine Art

These Japanese confections are mini masterpieces

BY KAREN SHIMIZU

**W**HEN I WAS A KID, MY FATHER made frequent trips to Japan, where he was born, to visit his parents, and when he came back he never failed to bring me and my siblings gifts: good-luck charms from Buddhist temples; rice-paper balloons that inflated and collapsed with a crackly sigh; and, my favorite, boxes of the traditional Japanese sweets known as wagashi. Inside each box, we'd find an eye-popping array of shapes, colors, and textures—chewy rice cakes, candies shaped like leaves or flowers, blocks of red bean jelly, and on and on.

Wagashi, in their various incarnations, have been made in Japan for more than a thousand years. They were originally simple fruit and nut confections, but by the 16th century their making had evolved into a mature art, their shapes and ornamentation evoking the forms of nature, and they had become an important component of formal tea ceremonies. Wagashi have traditionally been made from ingredients central to Japanese cuisine, such as red adzuki beans, which are pressed into *an*, a sweet paste; glutinous rice, which is used for making a springy cake called mochi; and seaweed, which is boiled to make an agar gelatin known as kanten. Eventually, as Japan came into contact with other cultures, foreign ingredients were embraced; for instance, kasutera, a European-style cake made with eggs, became popular in the 17th century, after Portuguese traders began visiting Japan.

Dad still showers his kids with wagashi, but now he buys them closer to home: at the New York City outlet of Minamoto Kitchoan, a Japanese confectioner founded in 1947. Minamoto Kitchoan's treats are made in Okayama, a prefecture known for the cultivation of fruit, and seasonal fresh fruits are the star ingredients in a number of its finest wagashi, such as sakuranbo, a springtime treat consisting of a single cherry suspended in kanten.

My favorite wagashi is the adorable, hamburger-like tsuya: a generous dollop of red bean paste between two mini wheat pancakes. It's the perfect companion to my breakfast coffee. Luckily, I never have to worry about running out of them, because every time I'm down to my last one, my father comes around with a fresh box. Minamoto Kitchoan's wagashi are available by the piece or in sets from \$3 to \$75; to order, visit [www.kitchoan.com](http://www.kitchoan.com) or call 201/313-9355. 🍡

**Clockwise from top left: tsuya (pancakes with red bean paste), sakuranbo (cherry in seaweed jelly), nonoutage (red and white bean pastes covered in green tea paste), oribenishiki (red bean and chestnut-filled cake), honneriyokan (red bean jelly), hanatsubomi (yuzu filled with white bean paste), tsukininishiki (chestnuts in red bean jelly), and shunsaika (sponge cake-covered mochi filled with bean paste and white chocolate).**

MICHAEL KRAUS



# The SAVEUR Chef Series

**ALEXANDRA GUARNASCHELLI** is no stranger to foodies. Before she scored a cooking show on the Food Network, she'd spent six years as executive chef at Butter in New York City, where she still delights diners by bringing together the familiar and the unexpected. On her show, *The Cooking Loft*, she's reeling in even more admirers by focusing on simple, flavorful food mixed with plenty of personality. We talked to her about what she's cooking right now.



BILL DURGIN

## How would you describe your cooking?

I try to make food that people crave, because that's what keeps them coming back. Specifically, I love local ingredients. I treat them simply, but I strive to do a bit more with them than just put them on the plate. As the chef Mark Miller once told me, "That's not a cooking philosophy—that's a shopping philosophy."

## Are you excited that it's March?

Yes! And no. March is sort of a tough time. It feels like spring. It can be so warm that some people come to the farmers' market asking for strawberries. But really, you're still stuck in what some people might consider root vegetable purgatory. For chefs, this time of year is like the night before Christmas. You can smell spring. You can't wait for fava beans and asparagus and peas. But you have to—at least for a little while longer.

## So what's a chef to do?

Luckily, I love winter vegetables. With spring produce, you can just wash it, dry it off, and put it on a plate with lemon juice and olive oil. But my winter favorites just need a little more love. I roast rutabaga with nutmeg. I mix lovely parsley root with celery root to make a soup with just a little cream. And I take kohlrabi, shave it really thin, and sauté it quickly with star anise and finish it with a little lemon juice. When I'm really feeling down, I pull out ramp pickles, peach jams, and other treats that I made when brighter flavors were available.

### RUTABAGA WITH BUTTER-TOASTED SPICES AND CITRUS

SERVES 4

- 1** **tblsp. unsalted butter**
- 1/4** **tsp. ground mace or 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg**
- 1/8** **tsp. ground allspice**
- 1/4** **tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 3** **whole cloves**
- 2** **large rutabaga, about 1 1/2–2 pounds, peeled and sliced into 3/4-inch-thick wedges**
- Kosher salt, to taste**
- Juice from 1/2 lemon, about 1 tblsp.**
- Juice from 1/2 orange, about 1 tblsp.**

In a large skillet, melt the butter over low heat, taking care not to brown it. Add the spices, stir, and cook for 1 minute. Add the rutabaga, season with salt and toss to coat in the butter. Cook the rutabaga over medium heat in a single layer, flipping each piece after about 5 minutes, until it becomes translucent and tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, about 10 to 15 minutes total. (If the pieces start to brown, add a splash of water.) Take the skillet off the heat, add the lemon and orange juice, stir, and serve.





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# REPORTER

## Melting Pot

Authentic mozzarella in Bengal? Where there's a will, there's a way

BY INDRANI SEN



**S**INCE I WAS A CHILD VISITING MY Indian-born father's family in Calcutta I have adored Indian flatbreads—pillow nans, buttery parathas, whole-wheat chapattis, and more. Being half Italian, though, I've always steered away from one kind of flatbread in India: pizza. The country's biggest cities now boast such chains as Pizza Hut and Domino's, but the pizzas those places sell are, as a rule, dismal when compared with the crunchy, olive oil-rubbed squares I've devoured in Rome, the lightly charred thin-crust pies native to Naples, and the satisfying, cheesy slices I eat in New York City, where I now live. The pitfalls of Indianized pizza are many, but none are more dispiriting to me than the cheese: usually processed spreads or packaged slices.

That's why I was delighted to find Fire and Ice, a Calcutta pizzeria

that opened in 2005. When I first visited the restaurant, a grandmother in a sari and a sullen teenager playing a handheld video game shared a pizza at one table, while a hip, young couple canoodled at another. The pizzeria attracts a steady flow of upwardly mobile Calcuttans, who have developed a taste for the establishment's Neapolitan-style pizzas. The thin-crust pies are minimally topped, and the mozzarella is perfect: milky and rich, moist but not oily, bubbly and toasted brown in spots.

How, I wondered, did they come by mozzarella like this in Calcutta? When I phoned Fire and Ice's owner, Annamaria Forgione, to find out, she told me an interesting tale of global intersections. In 1988, Forgione, a Neapolitan, moved to Kathmandu, Nepal, with her husband, a Brit who had accepted a teaching job there. When she started her first pizza parlor in the city, also called Fire and Ice, 14 years ago, she made do at first with a locally made cows' milk cheese, called kanchan, but found it to be heavier than she liked. Importing frozen mozzarella from Italy was prohibitively expensive because of high excise taxes and bureaucratic tangles.

Still, Forgione wasn't willing to compromise. "I like to do things the way they're done in Italy," she said. "I want people to know how it would taste there." After reading up on Italian mozzarella and consulting with a Danish-run dairy in Nepal that was working with local farmers on improving the quality of their milk, Forgione developed a technique in which she mixed cows' milk with the higher-fat milk of buffalo, which makes the mozzarella softer. Initially there were setbacks: the Danish government canceled its dairy project, and a cheese-making facility Forgione set up in her house didn't pan out, because transporting the milk there required preservatives that made it unsuitable for the production of cheese. Eventually, though, Forgione partnered with a Nepalese farmer named Achyut Ghimire, who was able to provide the milk and, following Forgione's specifications, make the mozzarella himself.

By mid-2005, Fire and Ice Kathmandu was a local institution, and Forgione decided the time was right to open a branch in India. She settled on Calcutta and flew Ghimire in to train two young Bengali men in her mozzarella technique. All she needed now was a reliable source of milk. As luck would have it, the Italian consulate in Calcutta was interested in funding a dairy farm but didn't quite know where to start. Further inquiries led Forgione to the Institute for Indian Mother and Child, a charity that runs a rural health and education project south of

INDRANI SEN's most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Sweet Leaf" (November 2007).

**Chandan Samanta, a mozzarella maker at the Institute for Indian Mother and Child's Mozzarella Unit in West Bengal, India, above.**



## REPORTER

Calcutta, and she connected the dots. With the help of the Italian government, the institute's Mozzarella Unit was born. Using the microcredit system—in which women too poor to receive bank credit are offered small, collateral-free loans—the Mozzarella Unit helped women in the village of Sonarpur purchase 110 cows, whose milk the Bengali cheese makers would use to produce mozzarella.

When I visited Sonarpur, Shafali Mandal, a participant in the microcredit project, paraded her snow-white cow before me with evident pride. Mandal told me that the project has been an important source of income for her family. Every morning, she and the other women carry their cows' milk in metal urns to the Mozzarella Unit, housed in a concrete building a short way up the road, where they are paid a slightly higher than average price as an incentive to keep the cows well fed and the milk's fat content high. Fire and Ice then buys the cheese from the Mozzarella Unit.

Cheese making is nothing new in India, where the cottage cheese known as paneer is served in such dishes as saag paneer, a

## THE LUSH BANANA GROVES OUTSIDE WERE WORLDS AWAY FROM ITALY, YET THE TWO MEN CARRIED OUT THE RITUALS OF ITALIAN CHEESE MAKING WITH PRACTICED EASE

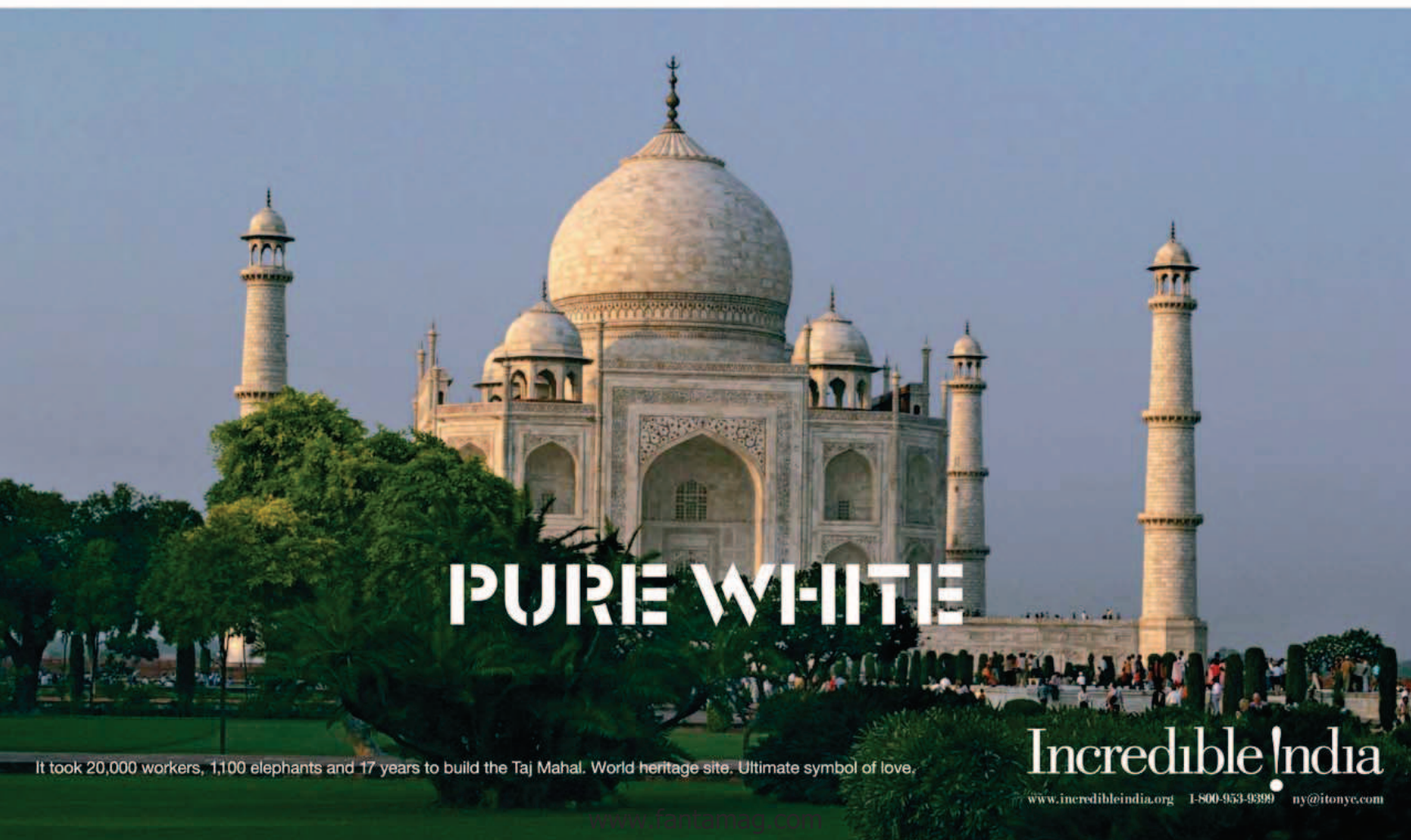
curry with spinach and mustard greens, and paneer bhorji, a scrambled eggs–like preparation. I felt fairly certain, however, that Satya Bhandary and Chandan Samanta were the only mozzarella makers in all of West Bengal when I visited them at the Mozzarella Unit. Their work space looked like a science classroom, with its massive steel pots and kerosene burner. The lush banana groves outside were worlds away from Campania, Italy, where mozzarella is thought to have originated in the 12th century. Yet the two men carried out the rituals of Italian cheese making with practiced ease: curdling the milk with citric acid and rennet, draining the whey, and slicing the curds.

Bhandary, sitting on a low stool, placed

the curd slices in a metal pot. When they had melted, he folded the solid mass in half and pressed down, then folded and pressed again. He stretched the cheese above his head and dropped it back into the pot, repeating the motions a few times before handing the mass to Samanta, who stood at a worktable. Samanta flattened the cheese, folded it, then flattened and folded it again. Next, in a quick, fluid motion, he gathered the edges to form a ball, which he lowered into a saltwater bath, where it would soak for three hours before being prepared for delivery to Fire and Ice.

Samanta plucked off a morsel of the warm, fresh cheese for me to try. The taste was pure Italy, but the image it brought to my mind was of a young woman in a green sari, brushing her cow with maternal tenderness. For Forgione, too, the project is as much about people as it is about cheese. "I think to be successful," she told me, "you have to create success for others, too."

THE PANTRY, page 96: More information about Fire and Ice Pizzeria.



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# CLASSIC

## Soup of Ages

To many people from outside Hungary, real goulash comes as a revelation

BY CAROLYN BÁNFALVI

**S**INCE I MOVED TO Budapest a decade ago, I've enjoyed introducing visiting American friends to Hungarian cooking. Always, I start my guests off with the one local dish most of them know: goulash. At least they think they know it. When you ask for that dish in Hungary, you won't get the flour-thickened, sour cream-laced stew that's come to be called goulash in the States. In fact, you probably won't get a stew at all but a delicious, savory soup. Formally called gulyásleves but more often known simply as gulyás (pronounced GOO-yash), it's one of many soups that figure in the Hungarian culinary canon, including almaleves, a chilled apple soup, and Jókai bableves, a bean and smoked-pork specialty named for the 19th-century Hungarian novelist Mór Jókai.


That Hungary's best-known dish is so liberally interpreted outside its home country has long been a source of some annoyance among Hungarians. In the classic *Hungarian Cookery Book* (George Vajna & Co., 1934), the early-20th-century Budapest restaurateur Károly Gundel complained, "Without wishing to give offence to my colleagues abroad, I am forced to state that they usually spoil the reputation of that excellent dish." In traditional gulyás, paprika is a key ingredient, just as it is in the Americanized version, but the real thing contains no flour or sour cream; it derives its luxurious texture and intensity of flavor from a slow, easy simmer.

Beef is the meat of choice (though a thicker, mutton version, called birkagulyás, also exists). In fact, the word *gulyás* means cowboy, a nod to the dish's supposed origins among medieval Hungarian cowherds, who stewed meat until all the liquid disappeared, dried it further in the sun to preserve it, and then, when they wanted a quick and hearty soup out on the range, simply added the dried meat and some water to a pot and heated it over a fire. Even today, many Hungarians, including my husband, occasion-

ally cook gulyás in a *bogrács* (cauldron) over an open fire, which imparts a subtly smoky flavor.

When I make gulyás, I start by sautéing onions in bacon fat or sunflower oil. Next, I add cubes of beef and brown them; then I put in a few spoonfuls of Hungarian sweet paprika (never the hot kind) before pouring in water to make a broth. After it has all simmered for about 45 minutes I add diced potatoes and tiny, pinched dumplings called csipetke. The result is a dish as hearty as its American cousin but at once more refined and more restorative.



Most Hungarian cooks follow this basic recipe, but even traditionalists diverge on certain points. Some skip the potatoes or the dumplings; my mother-in-law adds dried marjoram and chopped garlic, carrots, parsnips, tomatoes, and fresh banana peppers. The restaurateur George Lang, who acquired Károly Gundel's namesake establishment in 1991, allows for the addition of caraway seeds, while the author Elek Magyar, in *The Gourmet's Cook Book: Hungarian Cuisine* (Corvina, 1970), insisted that they "spoil the touch". I've tried gulyás both ways—and many other ways besides—and have never ceased to find it a delicious surprise. 

### GULYÁS

(Hungarian Goulash)

SERVES 4-6

The recipe for this hearty, savory soup (left) comes from Katalin Bánfalvi, the author's mother-in-law, who lives in the village of Bőny, in northwestern Hungary. Hungarian sweet paprika (see page 96) confers a singularly deep, rich color and flavor.

- 4 **tbsp. sunflower or canola oil**
- 2 **yellow onions, chopped**
- 1 1/2 **lbs. beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1/2" cubes**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- 1/4 **cup sweet paprika**
- 2 **tsp. dried marjoram**
- 2 **tsp. caraway seeds**
- 2 **cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 2 **medium carrots, cut into 1/2" cubes**
- 2 **medium parsnips, cut into 1/2" cubes**
- 1 1/2 **lbs. medium new potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2" cubes**
- 1 **tomato, cored and chopped**
- 1 **Italian frying pepper, chopped**

① Heat oil in a 5-qt. dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and translucent, about 10 minutes. Increase heat to high. Add beef and season with salt and pepper. Cook, uncovered, stirring only once or twice, until the meat is lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Stir in paprika, marjoram, caraway, and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add carrots, parsnips, and 5 cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium. Simmer, covered, until the beef is nearly tender, about 40 minutes.

② Add potatoes and cook, uncovered, until tender, about 25 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and peppers; cook for 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with rye bread, if you like.



## A composite image featuring a smiling woman in a white chef's coat with a "U.S. FARM-RAISED Catfish SAFETY" logo on the left, and a man in a dark shirt and jeans holding a clipboard on a dirt path by a pond on the right, under a sunset sky.

[illegible]

Sponsored by The Catfish Institute





Pastry chefs decorate Easter tortes  
in Demel's production kitchen.



# VIENNA'S SWEET EMPIRE

*For more than two centuries,  
Demel, Austria's most enduring and  
legendary confectionery shop, has been  
a bright light at the center  
of Europe's rich pastry tradition*

BY NICK MALGIERI  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANDON NORDEMAN







## VIENNA PASTRIES

I'LL NEVER FORGET the first time I set foot inside Demel, Vienna's famous pastry shop. It was the summer of 1973, and I was apprenticing in the kitchen of a hotel near Zurich after graduating from culinary school in New York. As a 25-year-old student of the pastry arts, I couldn't wait to get to Vienna, the world capital of sweets, to taste the confections I'd been reading about for so many years. When a break in my work schedule appeared, I boarded a train for Austria's capital city, checked in to a \$10-a-night hotel, and followed my guidebook's directions to the historic First District, in the center of town. There, steps from the imperial Hofburg palace, sat the pastry shop of my dreams: K.u.K. Hofzuckerbäcker Ch.



Demel's Söhne (Imperial and Royal Court Sugar Baker Christoph Demel's Sons), or Demel, for short.

For a few years leading up to that trip, I had devoured every mention of Demel in glossy food and travel magazines. But nothing could have prepared me for the sensory overload of encountering all the Viennese classics—dense chocolate sachertortes, jam-filled linzertortes, strudels wrapped in papery-thin pastry, pastel-frosted petits fours, and more—housed inside gleaming glass cases trimmed with polished brass and wood. For every familiar dessert there was an unfamiliar one, covered in buttercream, meringue, marzipan, or chocolate glaze, as well as trays of cream-filled buns and puff pastries. I stood there, agog, until I started to wonder why none of the black-clad host-

**Federico von Berzevichy-Pallavicini, above left; Amadeus cookies (see recipe on page 52), above right. Facing page, guests in Demel's dining room.**

esses were offering me a seat. It dawned on me that, in my jeans and leather jacket, I wasn't exactly dressed for the occasion. Most of the men in the dining room wore suits, and many of the women had donned pearls. Had I known then that Demel was the drawing room of Vienna's high society and that the staff had a reputation for ignoring those who didn't fit the mold, I might have packed a sport coat. I respectfully took my leave.

Once outside, I snapped as many photos of Demel's elaborate window displays as my Instamatic camera would allow; they were decorated for autumn's hunting season with forest logs and leaves fashioned out of sugar and meringue. Right then and there, I vowed to return to

DEMEL'S GLASS PASTRY  
CASES, STOCKED WITH  
SACHERTORTES,  
LINZERTORTES, AND  
MORE, SPARK A  
SENSORY OVERLOAD

Demel in the future, not only as a customer but as a serious baker. Someday, I told myself, I would get inside that bakeshop and learn how Europe's most extraordinary sweets are made.

FOUNDED IN 1786, DEMEL is a living vestige of the Austro-Hungarian empire, which came to power in the 13th century and reached its peak during the rococo era, when the house of Hapsburg, based in Vienna, rose to dominate not just Austria but also Slovakia, Hungary, and most of what we now refer to as eastern Europe. Beginning in the 1870s, under Emperor Franz Joseph, Vienna, as well as Budapest and Prague, became a hotbed of culture and the arts. A flourishing of the culinary arts ensued, the empire's cooks drawing from both western and eastern European traditions. The emperor and his wife, Elisabeth, hosted elaborate feasts at the Hofburg palace, where savory courses were followed by intricately prepared sweets that were often richer and even more fancifully decorated than those found in France.

Vienna's supremacy in the pastry arts derives from those regal traditions and the lively exchange of ideas between cultures within the empire. Another factor was the city's love of coffee, epitomized by a rich *Kaffeehaus* tradition, which blossomed during the 18th century. Pastry shops during that period served coffee too, sealing the everlasting bond between coffee and sweets and establishing themselves as social institutions.

Demel was one of those pastry shops. Originally called Burgtheater Zuckerbäckerei (Burgtheater Sugar Bakery), for its location near the city's main theater, it was founded by one Ludwig Dehne and became known for rustic süßspeisen (sweet dishes) and the more ele-



gant mehl Speisen (flour-based dishes) on which Austro-Hungarian pastry chefs were beginning to build their reputations: cakes, dumplings, puddings, and a vast array of boiled and baked treats. The bakery was sold in 1857 to one of Dehne's bakers, Christoph Demel, whose sons relocated it to a street near the imperial palace 30 years later. The move was a strategic one: soon Demel had become one of a handful of pastry shops (along with Sluka, Heiner, and Gerstner, which also still exist) allowed to supply the palace with sweets. Empress Elisabeth was famously fond of Demel's candied violets and its coffee, which she had sent to her room each morning.

Demel also became the social center of Vienna's upper crust, *(continued on page 46)*

NICK MALGIERI is the director of baking programs at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City and the author of, most recently, *The Modern Baker* (DK Publishing, 2008).





From russische punschtorte to trüffeltorte, the pastry cases at Demel feature 90 different cakes, pastries, and cookies daily.

- Kartoffeltorte € 1.90
- Dobbertorte € 1.90
- Biskottentorte € 1.90
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- Nuss-Kaffee-torte € 1.90
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Russische Punschorte  
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Senegaltorte  
€ 3,90



## VIENNA PASTRIES

(continued from page 43) and its popularity continued to grow even after the Hapsburg empire collapsed, in 1918.

It did suffer one memorable setback, however, involving the city's most beloved chocolate cake. In the 1930s, the story goes, Demel purchased the recipe for its signature sachertorte, a two-inch-tall cake glazed with apricot preserves and coated with a shiny chocolate icing, from the Sacher family, who had opened the Hotel Sacher in 1876. After selling the recipe, the Hotel Sacher continued to make the cake, but differently: it split it into two layers and added apricot preserves between them. Litigation ensued, and the Hotel Sacher won the right to call its cake

pastries at Demel were every bit as sumptuous and meticulously crafted as on my first visit.

Sitting at one of Demel's marble-topped tables, I sampled a slice of russische punschtorte (Russian punch cake), a rum-spiked sponge cake layered with rich custard cream and frosted with soft meringue (which is kissed with the flame from a blowtorch to give it a caramelized flavor). Each bite was a carefully considered layering of flavor, texture, and aroma. Equally sublime was the trüffeltorte, a buttery chocolate cake filled with an airy whipped chocolate ganache (cream mixed with chocolate) known in Vienna as parisercreme (Parisian cream).

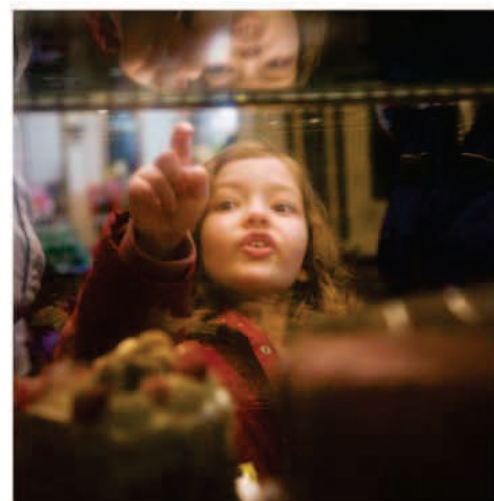
Over the years, I'd clung to my dream of getting inside Demel's kitchen, and this time,

popular sweets, including one of my favorites, the marmorgugelhupf, a marbled version of Vienna's famous coffee cake that is baked in a fluted mold. By way of answering my questions, the chef led me into the production area, a warren of rooms with soaring ceilings. I could hardly believe it: 35 years after my first visit, I was finally in Demel's inner sanctum.

I inhaled deeply and was met with that familiar and reassuring scent of butter and sugar baking together. Before me was a scene of intense but methodical activity taking place amid ovens and storage racks, a sheeter for rolling dough, mixers of several sizes, and yards and yards of wood and marble tabletops. In a bakery like Demel, where almost every item



AT DEMEL,  
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COOKS FASTIDIOUSLY  
ICE CAKES, DECO-  
RATE COOKIES, AND  
MOLD CHOCOLATES



the Original Sachertorte.

After the war years, the shop enjoyed another golden age, which lasted through the 1960s, under the ownership of Klara Demel and her husband, Federico von Berzevichy-Pallavicini. An architect and designer, Berzevichy-Pallavicini introduced the beautiful boxes and wrapping papers still used by the shop today. He also collaborated with chefs on the over-the-top window displays that I ogled on my first visit, all those years ago.

I ULTIMATELY MADE IT back to Demel, though it took me more than 30 years. Needless to say, I was better dressed this time around. I was also a professional pastry chef and could more fully appreciate the inspired handiwork that went into the bakery's astonishing array of sweets. Some things had changed at Demel over the years: in 2002, the bakery was bought by a Vienna-based international gourmet food company, and it's no longer such an exclusive scene. But I was pleased to discover that the

I had an in: I'd arranged to meet with the shop's head chef, Dietmar Muthenthaler, the man in charge of every crumb of cake and cookie Demel produces. Muthenthaler, 44, a native of the region, has been baking since his teens and has worked in some of the finest pastry shops in Vienna. When I arrived on the day of our appointment, he led me toward a back room where a floor-to-ceiling plate-glass partition overlooked the production area. As we chatted, we watched some of the best pastry cooks in Europe ice cakes, decorate chocolates, and cut out thousands of tiny cookies from sheets of dough. "When I first came to Demel, in 2002," Muthenthaler said, "I found antiquated production methods that had never been updated, because Demel is Demel, and Demel never changes. It was a lot of work to develop more-efficient ways of producing Demel's specialties and retrain the staff accordingly."

I peppered Muthenthaler with questions about the finer points of making Demel's most

is shaped, filled, or decorated by hand, these tables, or benches, as they are called, are where you find the most interesting work. At one, bakers sliced towering stacks of round cakes into layers; at another, a woman was frosting a cake by holding it from below with her fingertips and maneuvering it to make it meet a spatula that she held in her other hand. At another bench workers piped pastel flowers onto glossy cakes, while nearby a young apprentice was rolling brioche dough into long cylinders and then shaping them into knots, braids, and other designs.

At the end of my tour, Muthenthaler invited me back for an even more close-up experience, and I spent the following two days in Demel's production area, learning how to make everything from (continued on page 51)

**Marbled coffee cake (see recipe on page 52), above left; a young customer at Demel, above right. Facing page, Dietmar Muthenthaler, Demel's head chef.**









①



②



③



⑧

## TORTE 101

The construction of a classic Demel layer cake like the russische punschtorte is a relatively straightforward process. First, cream filling is piped onto the first layer ①. Next, the second layer is added, doused with rum, and topped with filling ②. Once the top cake layer has been added, the meringue frosting ③ is applied ④. On top of that goes a layer of decorative meringue flourishes on the sides ⑤ and top ⑥. Finally, the meringue is lightly flame-toasted ⑦ and topped with candied violets and chopped pistachios ⑧.



④



⑦



⑥



⑤





Russian punch cake (see recipe on page 52).







## VIENNA PASTRIES

(continued from page 46) diminutive Amadeus butter cookie sandwiches (filled with almond paste and dipped in chocolate) to the russische punschorte. I had always admired the rich aroma and moist texture of that torte, and as I observed a baker sprinkle the naked layers of the cake with an upturned bottle of Spitz rum, a locally made spirit with a distinctive floral flavor, I reveled in finally knowing the real secret behind one of my favorite Demel desserts. After the cake was filled with custard and frosted with soft meringue (called schaummasse), the baker piped on more meringue in elegant ribbons and swirls, then fired up an extra-large butane pastry torch, which he wielded nimbly around the cake's surface to toast the meringue a light golden color.

Watching the production of Demel's famous trüffeltorte was equally revelatory: I was fasci-



nated to learn that the batter is similar to the one that's used for sachertorte, except that its baked layers are spiked with rum. Instead of simply pouring the liquor over the top of the cake, though, the cooks add it to a sugar syrup, whose sweetness offsets the chocolate's slightly bitter edge.

When the cake was finished, a young baker readied it for the pastry case by slicing it carefully into 16 portions. He put a thick slice onto a plate and handed it to me. The filling was airy and light, in perfect contrast to the rich cake and bittersweet dusting of cocoa on top. As I savored the confection, I experienced a heady mix of emotions: a sense of joy, inspiration, humility, and, most of all, gratitude—to Demel, namely, for bringing such sweet things to life.

**Chocolate truffle cake (see recipe on page 53), facing page.**

## THE GUIDE

Vienna

Dinner for two with drinks and tip:

**MODERATE** \$60-\$100 **EXPENSIVE** OVER \$100

## WHERE TO STAY

**HOTEL BRISTOL** Körntnerring 1 (43/1/515-160; [www.luxurycollection.com/bristol](http://www.luxurycollection.com/bristol)). Rates: \$334 double. Fin de siècle opulence defines every inch of this fabled hotel, which opened opposite the city's opera house in 1892. The lavishly furnished rooms are anything but minimalist, and they're equipped with all modern amenities. The hotel's restaurant, the formal Korso bei der Oper, offers sophisticated but adventuresome renditions of traditional Austrian and Continental cuisine.

**HOTEL RATHAUS WINE & DESIGN** Lange-gasse 13 (43/1/400-1122; [www.hotel-rathaus-wien.at](http://www.hotel-rathaus-wien.at)). Rates: \$270 double. The spacious, coolly appointed rooms at this wine-themed hotel are named after noted producers of Austrian wine. The hotel is located in Josefstadt, a stately residential neighborhood a 15-minute walk from the center of the city.

## WHERE TO EAT

**CAFÉ DIGLAS** Wollzeile 10 (43/1/512-5765; [www.diglas.at](http://www.diglas.at)). Hans Diglas is a third-generation coffeehouse proprietor whose café and pastry shop prepare some of Vienna's best traditional pastries and desserts. Diglas has been credited with single-handedly spurring a revival of mehlsspeisen: flour-based sweets such as baked puddings and boiled dumplings. Kaiserschmarrn, a sweet pancake torn into small pieces and then sautéed in butter, is another Diglas specialty. (The Café-Konditorei Diglas, located at Fleischmarkt 16, is a smaller, more casual offshoot of the original.)

**DEMEL** Kohlmarkt 14 (43/1/535-1717; [www.demel.at](http://www.demel.at)). A high temple of Viennese pastry making, this 222-year-old institution in the city's Kohlmarkt, a pedestrian street lined with luxury shops just steps from the imperial Hofburg palace, still officially does business under the name Imperial and Royal Court Sugar Baker Christoph Demel's Sons. The confections on offer in the bakery's rococo-style main room include ethereal mohnstrudel, a pastry rich with poppy seeds, and a meticulously constructed frou-frou, an

egg-shaped cake with chestnut cream swaddled in chocolate ribbons and sprinkled with pistachio dust. A small selection of salads and sandwiches is also available.

**DO & CO STEPHANSPLATZ** Stephansplatz 12 (43/1/535-3969; [www.doco.com](http://www.doco.com)). Expensive. Situated atop the Haas Haus, a strikingly curvilinear (and, given its location in the heart of old Vienna, controversial) glass-and-steel commercial building completed in 1990, this contemporary restaurant features global fare like sushi, curries, stir-fries, and kebabs.

**FROMME HELENE** Josefstädterstrasse 15 / Lange-gasse 33 (43/1/406-9144; [www.frommehelene.at](http://www.frommehelene.at)). Moderate. A typical Beisl (neighborhood restaurant) in the Josefstadt neighborhood, Fromme Helene is named after the hard-drinking but good-hearted heroine of a favorite late-18th-century illustrated novel. This is the place to try traditional Austrian favorites like tafelspitz (boiled beef) and wiener schnitzel.

**HOTEL SACHER** Philharmonikerstrasse 4 (43/1/514-560; [www.sacher.com](http://www.sacher.com)). This 133-year-old hotel in Vienna's historic First District was opened by the son of Franz Sacher, who, at the age of 16, created the world-famous sachertorte at the behest of the German-Austrian statesman Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich (Sacher was filling in for the prince's regular chef, who was ill). The rich chocolate cake is sold to go, in a keepsake wooden box engraved with the hotel's logo, and also by the slice—the perfect accompaniment for a wiener mélange (coffee with steamed milk)—at the Café Sacher, an archetypically splendid Viennese coffeehouse.

**ÖSTERREICHER IM MAK** Stubenring 5 (43/1/714-0120; [www.oesterreicherimmak.at](http://www.oesterreicherimmak.at)). Expensive. Chef Helmut Österreicher's acclaimed restaurant in Vienna's Museum of Applied Art furthers his stated mission to lift Viennese classics to a lighter realm with inspired dishes like excellent marinated calf's tongue on beet root horseradish and sautéed halibut with vegetable vinaigrette.



## VIENNA PASTRIES

See page 90 for techniques on marbling a cake, chopping chocolate, and other helpful baking tips. For hard-to-find ingredients and baking tools, see page 96.



## AMADEUS COOKIES

MAKES 24 COOKIES

These chocolate-dipped sandwich cookies are filled with a luscious mixture of pistachios and almond paste.

## FOR THE COOKIES:

- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 tsp. fine salt

## FOR THE FILLING:

- 1/2 cup shelled and unsalted pistachios
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 3 1/2 oz. almond paste, at room temperature, chopped (see page 96)
- 2 tbsp. cherry liqueur, preferably kirsch
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

## FOR THE GLAZE:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 tbsp. light corn syrup
- 4 oz. semisweet chocolate, preferably 54%, roughly chopped

① Make the cookie dough: In a bowl, beat 1/2 cup flour, butter, and confectioners' sugar with a handheld mixer on medium speed until pale and fluffy, 1-2 minutes. Add yolks one at a time, beating until smooth after each addition. Add salt and remaining flour; beat to make a dough. Halve dough, flatten into 2 disks, and wrap each with plastic wrap. Refrigerate dough for 1 hour.

② Make the filling: Heat oven to 325°. In the bowl of a food processor, pro-

cess the pistachios with the sugar until finely ground. Add almond paste and process until combined. Add the kirsch and vanilla and process until combined; set filling aside.

③ Transfer 1 dough disk to a lightly floured surface and roll with a floured rolling pin to a 1/8" thickness. Using a 1 3/4" round cookie cutter, cut out 24 cookies. Repeat with remaining dough disk. (Combine and reroll scraps to make 48 cookies in all.) Place cookies 1" apart on 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets and bake, rotating pans halfway through, until cookies are pale golden, about 20 minutes. Let cool.

④ Meanwhile, make the glaze: Bring sugar, corn syrup, and 3 tbsp. water to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan over high heat. Remove from the heat, add chocolate, and swirl pan to coat the chocolate with the sugar mixture. Let sit without stirring to allow the chocolate to melt, about 5 minutes. Slowly stir the chocolate with a rubber spatula until smooth; set aside to let cool slightly.

⑤ Spoon about 1 tsp. of the filling onto 24 cookies and top with remaining cookies. Gently press cookies together to sandwich them. Dip half of each cookie into the chocolate glaze. Transfer to a rack and let the glaze solidify.



## MARMORGUGELHUPF

Marbled Coffee Cake

SERVES 10

Austrian bakers make this coffee cake with a gugelhupf mold. (See page 96.) We've found that a 1 1/2-qt. bundt cake mold works just as well.

- 17 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 2 oz. semisweet chocolate, preferably 54%, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. dark rum
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting
- 2 tbsp. lemon zest
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 5 eggs, separated
- 1 cup sugar

① Heat oven to 325°. Grease a dark metal 1 1/2-qt. gugelhupf mold with 1 tbsp. butter. Add 1/4 cup flour and shake to evenly coat the inside of mold. Invert and tap out excess flour; set mold aside. Set a medium bowl over a 1-qt. saucepan of simmering water. Add chocolate; melt. Stir in rum and set aside to let cool slightly.

② Sift together remaining flour, cornstarch, and salt; set aside. In a bowl, beat remaining butter, confectioners' sugar, lemon zest, and vanilla using a handheld mixer on medium speed until mixture is pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg yolks one at a time, beating after each addition. Add reserved flour mixture to butter mixture in 3 additions, beating to combine after each addition. Set batter aside.

③ In a large nonreactive bowl, beat egg whites with handheld mixer on high speed until frothy. Sprinkle in sugar and beat to form stiff, glossy peaks. Whisk one-third of egg whites into reserved cake batter to lighten it. Using a rubber spatula, fold in remaining egg whites to make an airy cake batter.

④ Fold one-third of the cake batter into the reserved chocolate mixture to make a chocolate-flavored batter. Spoon half of the remaining cake batter into the buttered mold. Spoon all the chocolate batter into mold and top with remaining cake batter. Using a butter knife, swirl the chocolate batter into the cake batter to create a marbled effect. (See page 90 for more information.) Smooth the top. Bake until a

toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean, about 55 minutes. Transfer cake to a rack; let cool. Unmold cake and dust with confectioners' sugar.



## RUSSISCHE PUNSCHTORTE

Russian Punch Cake

SERVES 16

The hallmarks of this elegant layer cake are a creamy custard filling and a meringue frosting. See "Torte 101", page 48, for illustrated step-by-step instructions on how to make this cake.

## FOR THE FILLING:

- 1 1/4-oz. packet powdered gelatin
- 8 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 1 3/4 cups milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise, seeds scraped out and reserved

## FOR THE CAKE:

- 5 tbsp. unsalted butter (4 tbsp. melted)
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 4 eggs, separated
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup dark rum

## FOR THE MERINGUE FROSTING:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. cornstarch
- 1 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 4 egg whites

## FOR THE GARNISH (OPTIONAL):

- 16 candied violets
- 1 tbsp. shelled and unsalted pistachios, finely chopped

① Make the filling: Combine gelatin



## VIENNA PASTRIES

and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cold water in a small bowl and set aside. In a large metal bowl, whisk together yolks, sugar, and cornstarch; set aside. In a 2-qt. saucepan, bring milk, cream, and reserved vanilla seeds to a boil. While whisking constantly, slowly drizzle milk mixture into yolk mixture. Place bowl over a 2-qt. saucepan of simmering water. Cook, whisking constantly, until mixture thickens, 4–5 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in gelatin mixture; let cool to room temperature. Cover surface of filling with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, about 4 hours.

**2** Make the cake: Heat oven to 325°. Line bottom of 9" springform pan with parchment paper. Grease pan with 1 tbsp. butter. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour; shake to evenly coat inside of mold. Invert and tap out excess flour; set pan aside.

**3** In a large bowl, beat egg yolks and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar with a handheld mixer on medium speed until pale and airy, 4–5 minutes; set yolk mixture aside. In a large nonreactive bowl, beat egg whites on high speed until frothy. Sprinkle in remaining sugar; beat to form stiff, glossy peaks. Beat one-fourth of the egg whites into yolk mixture. Using a rubber spatula, fold in remaining egg whites. Fold in melted butter, remaining flour, and salt. Pour batter into prepared pan; smooth top. Bake until a toothpick inserted in cake comes out clean, about 1 hour. Transfer to a rack; let cool. Invert; unmold cake. Cut cake into 3 horizontal layers (see "How-To: Cutting Cake Layers", at right); set cake layers aside.

**4** Place the bottom cake layer on a cardboard cake circle. Using a pastry brush, brush cake with one-third of the rum. Using a butter knife, spread half of the filling over cake. Top with second cake layer, brush with one-third of the rum, and spread with remaining filling. Top with remaining cake layer and brush with remaining rum; set cake aside.

**5** Make the meringue frosting: Heat sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water in a 2-qt.

saucepan over medium-high heat to make a syrup. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer inserted in the syrup reaches 240°. Meanwhile, in bowl of a standing mixer fitted with a whisk, beat confectioners' sugar, cornstarch, cream of tartar, and egg whites on medium speed until soft peaks begin to form, about 1 minute. While continuing to whisk, add the hot sugar syrup in a slow, steady stream to the egg whites. On high speed, beat until doubled in volume to make a thick and smooth frosting, about 10 minutes.

**6** Using a butter knife, spread  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of the frosting evenly over top and sides of cake in a  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick layer. Transfer remaining frosting to a pastry bag fitted with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter tip. Pipe top and sides decoratively with frosting. (Alternatively, spread remaining frosting over cake in swirls.) To lightly brown frosting (an optional step), light a small culinary butane torch. Hold torch 4" from cake and lightly caramelize frosting. Decorate with candied violets and sprinkle with pistachios.



## TRÜFFELTORTE

Chocolate Truffle Cake

SERVES 16

This cake uses chocolate four ways: ganache (chocolate cream frosting), chocolate cake layers, shavings, and cocoa (a method for chocolate shavings is at [SAVEUR.COM/118](http://saveur.com/118)).

## FOR THE CAKE:

- 11** **tbsp. unsalted butter, softened**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour**
- 6** **oz. semisweet chocolate, preferably 54%, chopped**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup confectioners' sugar**
- 7** **eggs, separated**

- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt**
- 1 cup sugar**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark rum**

## FOR THE GANACHE:

- 24** **oz. semisweet chocolate, preferably 54%, roughly chopped**
- 3** **cups heavy cream**
- Chocolate shavings**
- Cocoa powder, for dusting**

**1** Make the cake: Heat oven to 325°. Line bottom of a 9" springform pan with parchment paper. Grease pan with 1 tbsp. butter. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour; shake to evenly coat inside. Invert and tap out excess flour; set pan aside.

**2** Set a medium bowl over a 1-qt. saucepan of simmering water. Add chocolate; melt. Set aside to let cool.

**3** In a large bowl, beat the melted chocolate, butter, and confectioners' sugar with a handheld mixer on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg yolks one at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift in the flour and salt and mix until just combined; set batter aside.

**4** In a bowl, beat egg whites on high speed until frothy. Sprinkle in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar and beat to form stiff, glossy peaks. Using a rubber spatula, fold egg whites into the cake batter. Pour batter into prepared pan and smooth the top with the rubber spatula. Bake

until toothpick inserted in cake comes out clean, about 1 hour. Transfer to a rack; let cool. Invert and unmold cake. Cut cake horizontally into 3 even layers (see "How-To: Cutting Cake Layers", below); set cake layers aside.

**5** Dissolve remaining sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, whisking occasionally, until syrup has slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in rum; let cool.

**6** Make the ganache: Place chocolate in bowl of a standing mixer. Bring cream to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan; pour over chocolate; let sit for 5 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, combine chocolate and cream. Let cool, stirring occasionally, until ganache reaches room temperature. Chill until ganache has the consistency of peanut butter, 2 hours. Transfer bowl to standing mixer fitted with a whisk. Whip on medium speed, 15–20 seconds.

**7** Place bottom cake layer on a cardboard cake circle. Using a pastry brush, brush cake with one-third of rum syrup. Using a butter knife, spread 1 cup ganache evenly across cake top. Top with second cake layer and one-third of rum syrup; repeat process with remaining cake, rum syrup, and ganache. Spread remaining ganache over cake. Press chocolate shavings onto sides. Shake cocoa powder over cake with a mesh sieve.

## HOW-TO: CUTTING CAKE LAYERS



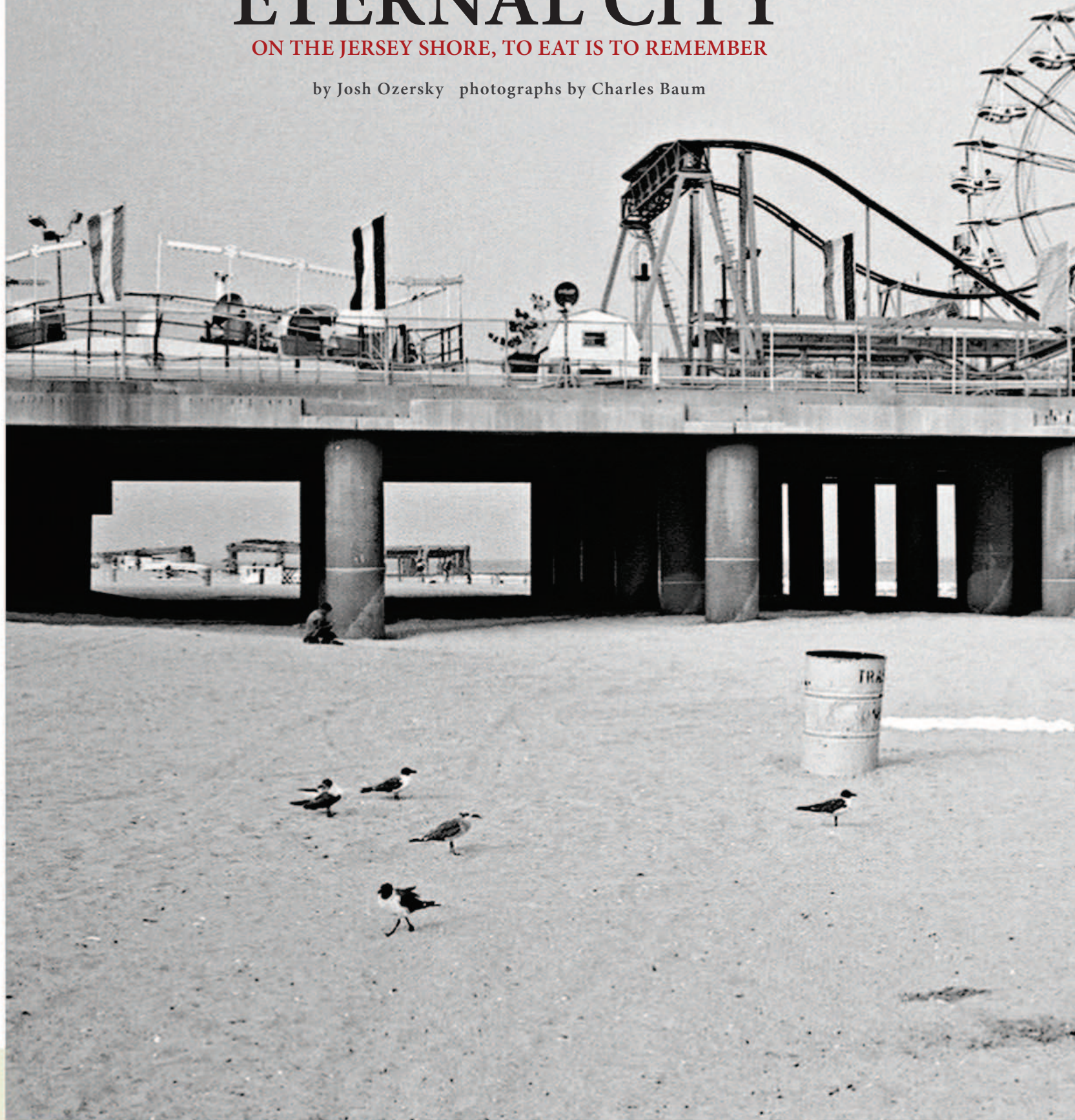
- 1** Press the flat edge of a serrated-blade knife on the top of the cake and, using a sawing motion, level off any uneven bumps. Flip the cake over. Using a ruler, measure the cake into thirds at several points around the side of the cake. **2** Score the side of the cake all around with the knife, connecting each score mark in straight, horizontal lines. Cut 1 inch deep into the side of the cake at the top-third score line; rotate the cake counterclockwise while keeping the knife stationary, dragging it along the line. **3** Continue turning the cake and dragging the knife closer to the middle until the top third releases. Repeat with remaining cake, so you'll have 3 layers.



# ETERNAL CITY

ON THE JERSEY SHORE, TO EAT IS TO REMEMBER

by Josh Ozersky photographs by Charles Baum







On the beach in front of Atlantic City's Steel Pier amusement park, 2004.







## ATLANTIC CITY

I DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING STRANGE, really, about sitting around in the Superstar Theater dressing room in Atlantic City, New Jersey, eating from Rip Taylor's pupu platter. The Ripper, as my father and all the other Resorts International Casino stagehands called the comedian, had put on his shaggy blond stage wig and was munching egg rolls, sent down as part of a preposterously overloaded catering spread from a low-end eatery at the resort called Café Casino.

"Take something," he said to me, gesturing to the plate of spareribs.

I looked at them pensively. "They do look good," I said and shrugged. "And they're free."

"You're LEARN'ing!" he yelled, reverting to his queeny, outsize stage manner. I took a sparerib. Then I took two more and wrapped them up in a cocktail napkin, for later.

I didn't know the Ripper well, though I had seen his act something like 50 times. This was 1989, and in the 11 years since my dad had started working at the casino, I had spent thousands of lonely hours in the light booth or at the back of the house, watching the likes of Buddy Hackett, Lola Falana, and the Ripper do their thing. On this night, though, I was there only to borrow \$40 from my father; I had a big date and didn't want to be caught short. It was to be one of the first happy experiences I'd had since moving to Atlantic City. I took the girl to Angelo's Fairmount Tavern for veal and homemade red wine and then pushed her around in a shopping cart in the lot of ShopRite before taking her back home and losing my virginity. I was 20.

Rip Taylor was the last thing on my mind that night, but I knew his act, one of the great ones, down to the last piece of thrown confetti. His best joke, told about two minutes in, was delivered in what sounded like a single breath:

"I went down to Café Casino and ordered a hamburger and a hot dog, and the waitress came back with a hamburger under her arm, and I said, 'What's that hamburger doing under your arm,' and she said, 'I'm defrosting it.' And I said, 'CANCEL the HOT DOG!'"

This was during Merv Griffin's brief ownership of

Resorts International—Merv being the only casino owner in the history of Atlantic City who was more interested in the talent than in the gaming. For my family, the casino was salvation. We had moved to Atlantic City in 1979 from Miami, where my mother had worked in a Coral Gables boutique and my father, a struggling abstract expressionist painter, earned a living in his family's hardware store; when it closed, my uncle got Dad a job as a stage technician in Atlantic City's first casino, which had opened the year before. It wasn't an easy transition. Mom, Dad, and I were exiles in a strange world, a semi-abandoned city by the sea that had lost its luster and was hoping to gain it back with old celebrities and new slot machines.

We cheered ourselves up with food. My father worked until nine or ten o'clock each night, and I remember waiting up for him to return with spareribs from China Land or stromboli from Mama Tucci's. When my mom died, three years after we'd moved to Atlantic City, those late-night meals and dining with Dad at our favorite haunts became a comforting routine. The city that adopted us was a ghost town, the boardwalk a monument, but the old Italian-American restaurants, the sub shops, the taverns, producing in that elegant squalor the same satisfying dishes over and over again, gave me a love of Atlantic City's food that has never left me.

Atlantic City had a few puffed-up Italian places—restaurants like Chef Vola's, located in the Chelsea neighborhood, and Scannicchio's, on California Avenue—known for

**Baked manicotti (see recipe on page 61), one of the classic dishes served at Angelo's Fairmount Tavern in Atlantic City.**

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serving foods like lobster tails and buffalo milk mozzarella, items as alien to the city's workaday menus as fugu. But the stagehands at Resorts were more likely to repair to places like the Lighthouse Tavern, long since demolished, renowned for its roast beef sandwiches (though my dad and I could never figure out why). Or Angelo's Fairmount Tavern, with its veal scaloppine and baked manicotti and homemade wine. Or Tony's Baltimore Grill, a pizzeria that sat a block from the boardwalk, unchanged since the beginning of time.

While Philadelphia day-trippers would flock to the White House, the famous sub shop that branded itself an institution, my father invariably favored places like Tony's and Angelo's. Maybe he recognized that, amid the proliferation of hotels and tourist traps, those relics, with their comforting insularity and fixedness, were among the few remaining vessels for the city's soul.

THE UNREMODELED ANGELO'S OF my father's era sat like a citadel in the middle of Ducktown, a mostly black neighborhood in the center of Atlantic City, now largely razed and rebuilt, that had earlier been an Italian-American enclave. I often wonder whether my father, a generally tolerant man, ever felt ill at ease among the Angelo's regulars, who had a reputation for being hostile to the local black residents who occasionally came in for a meal; if he was, he didn't show it. For him, the 18-seat dining room and comfortably worn bar were a solace.

The wine flowed freely at Angelo's, and the veal parmesan was dense and luscious, a thing to dream of all through a work shift. Framed eight-by-tens of baseball players lined the walls, along with movie stills from *The Godfather* and hagiographic images of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. On the floor, writ in black and white tiles, were the words ANGELO'S FAIRMOUNT TAVERN, EST.

**W** *A gallery of Charles Baum's Atlantic City photos, and a guide to some of the city's food destinations, at [SAVEUR.COM](http://SAVEUR.COM) /ISSUE118*

1936. Those faded photos of East Coast baseball clubs, their players now old or dead, would never fail to send my father into sentimental reveries, activated by red wine and loss.

And yet, for my father, Atlantic City wasn't the stuff of early memories and vanished time; it was the cultural slag heap on which his misfortunes had placed him. I never went a day without hearing, at some point, about the small-mindedness and suffocating quality of AC. His discovery, to cite one of a million instances, that American cheese was known locally as "square cheese" was as damning in his eyes as a DNA test. "Square cheese! Could there possibly be a more unimaginative term than that? Where else would they think to call it square cheese?"

That said, the parochialism that he so despised had a

**Veal parmesan (see recipe on page 61), above. Facing page, taking in some sun on the boardwalk, 1978.**



**IT SEEMED TO US THAT ATLANTIC CITY, THAT OLD, ENCHANTING CITY BY THE SEA, COULD NEVER CHANGE**

way of growing on him. I seldom saw him happier than at Tony's Baltimore Grill. The squat white building, with fewer windows than an adult bookstore, served little pizzas that came in a small pan and were topped with a sweet red sauce, greasy cheese, and irregular chunks of sweet Italian sausage made by an old man named Bongiovanni up the street on Atlantic Avenue. My father used to go to Tony's with the other stagehands, and I would come along, a miniature adult being indoctrinated in both the local culture and my father's half-hearted repudiation of it. He loved those pizzas even as he disparaged them. By the time he died, in 1998, my father had taken to speaking of what the sausage was like "back when Bongiovanni was still making it". It was accepted as gospel truth by Tony's regulars that, after Bongiovanni retired, the secret sausage recipe had been conveyed, presumably by armored car, to the Delaware Food Market, a grocery and meat store in neighboring Ventnor City, but somehow it just wasn't the same. Even my father had to admit it.

Tony's is still there, and I go back often. It now stands





## MY FATHER RECOGNIZED THAT PLACES LIKE TONY'S AND ANGELO'S WERE AMONG THE FEW REMAINING VESSELS OF THE CITY'S SOUL

in the shadow of the immense Tropicana hotel and casino, but as far as I'm concerned, the place hasn't changed a bit. The portly waitresses in their red shirts and black pants are just as I remember them; so are the tiny, laminated menus advertising pizza, spaghetti with meatballs, fried fish platters, and open-face white-bread sandwiches of roast beef. These days, the individual jukeboxes that still furnish the booths are filled with the likes of Kelly Clarkson and Justin Timberlake, but you can always find, as inviolate as the baseball photos in Angelo's bar, Sinatra's "My Way". I can barely hear the song without wanting to cry; it makes me think of Dad sitting there in his black work clothes with three other identically dressed stagehands, telling his favorite Sinatra story over a plate of pizza crusts.

"This was in 1979," he'd begin, "before 'New York, New York' came out, and Frank was still closing with 'My Way'. Frank likes to play with the microphone cable while he's

singing, so I was supposed to be paying out the cord, making sure that there was enough slack, but not so much that Frank might trip. I also had to keep the flashlight on his feet when he left the stage, so he could see where he was going. I had just started, and I was trying to do both at the same time. Frank finished up and walked toward me, and I had forgotten to move. And"—the story continued to its practiced climax—"Frank pointed at me and sang, 'Get out of MYYYY WAAAAAY!'"

I think of the story whenever I'm at Tony's. And I think of how, even a mere two or three years into our stay in Atlantic City, we became tethered to oft told anecdotes, fixed reference points, thousand-pound anchors of time and place. It seemed to us then that Atlantic City could never change. Of course, it has, as dozens of towering casinos and sleek restaurants have opened over the years. But, at least in a few poignant pockets, everything is unchanged. ✍️

*THE PANTRY, page 96: Contact information for Atlantic City restaurants featured in this article.*

**Oscars Hotel in Atlantic City, 1978, above.**



## ATLANTIC CITY



### ANGELO'S MARINARA SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

This tomato sauce, based on one served at Angelo's Fairmount Tavern, tastes just as good when tossed with spaghetti as it does when cooked in dishes like the veal parmesan and baked manicotti (also Angelo's recipes) shown on this page. We recommend using a good brand of canned tomatoes, such as Muir Glen; their balance of tartness and fruity sweetness will yield a brighter-tasting sauce. The sauce will keep in the refrigerator for up to 8 days.

- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 small onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped curly or flat-leaf parsley
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

① Put tomatoes and their liquid into the bowl of a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Set aside.

② Heat oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic, bay leaf, and onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent, about 10 minutes.

③ Add the chopped tomatoes along with the oregano and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens slightly and its flavors come together, about 20 minutes. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper.



### VEAL PARMESAN

SERVES 4

This rich and cheesy Italian-American favorite goes well with garlicky sautéed broccoli rabe or spinach.

- 8 2-oz. veal cutlets, preferably cut from the top round, pounded to 1/8" thickness (see technique, bottom right)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup flour
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 cups dried bread crumbs
- 8 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cups Angelo's marinara sauce (see recipe at left)
- 8 slices provolone cheese (about 6 oz.)
- 3/4 cup grated parmesan
- 2 tbsp. chopped curly or flat-leaf parsley

① Heat oven to broil and place a rack 10" from the heating element. Season veal cutlets lightly with salt and pepper.

② Place flour, eggs, and bread crumbs in separate shallow dishes. Working with one piece of veal at a time, dredge veal in flour, eggs, and bread crumbs and transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet.

③ Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 pieces breaded veal and cook, turning once with tongs, until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Transfer veal to an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Wipe out skillet and repeat with the remaining oil and veal.

④ Top each piece of veal with 1/3 cup of the marinara sauce and 1 slice pro-

volone cheese and sprinkle with 1 1/2 tbsp. parmesan. Broil until cheese is golden and bubbly, about 5 minutes. Using a spatula, divide the veal parmesan between 4 plates and sprinkle with the parsley.



### BAKED MANICOTTI

SERVES 6

A little nutmeg added to the ricotta filling for this classic baked pasta imparts a subtle note of spice that complements the rich flavors of the dish.

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3 cups Angelo's marinara sauce (see recipe at left)
- 1 8-oz. box dried manicotti shells (about 14)
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 cups whole-milk ricotta
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 7 tbsp. chopped curly or flat-leaf parsley
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs, beaten

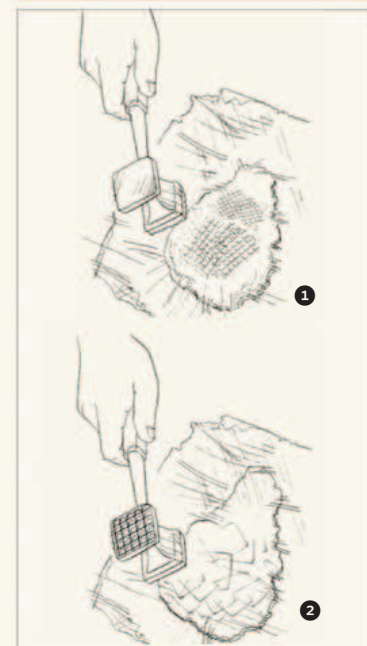
① Grease a 9" x 13" baking pan with 1 tbsp. butter and spread 1/2 cup of the marinara sauce across the bottom of the pan. Set aside. Bring a 6-qt. pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the manicotti and cook until just tender, about 8 minutes. Drain manicotti and rinse under cold water; set aside.

② Heat oven to 450°. Heat remaining butter in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer garlic to a medium bowl along with the ricotta, 1/2 cup parmesan, 5 tbsp. chopped parsley, salt, pepper, nutmeg, and eggs and

stir to combine.

③ Spoon some of the filling into both openings of each manicotti shell. (Alternatively, transfer the ricotta mixture to a 1-gallon resealable plastic bag, snip off a bottom corner of the bag, and pipe filling into pasta.) Repeat with remaining manicotti shells. Transfer stuffed manicotti to prepared baking dish, making 2 rows. Spread the remaining marinara sauce over the manicotti and sprinkle with remaining parmesan. Bake until hot and bubbly, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining parsley. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving.

### HOW-TO: SCALOPPINE



Very thin cutlets, called scaloppine, are essential to the veal parmesan dish shown on this page. Pounding them until they're thin tenderizes the meat and allows it to cook quickly. The key is to achieve maximal thinness without tearing or damaging the meat. ① Place a 2-oz. veal top round cutlet between 2 sheets of plastic wrap. ② With a meat mallet held waffled side down, begin pounding the veal cutlet using medium force, taking care not to work one part of the cutlet more than any other. When the cutlet is about 1/8" thick or less, tap it all over with the flat side of the mallet to smooth out the surface of the meat. Remove plastic wrap.





# TENDER AT HEART

With their ancient mystique and otherworldly looks, artichokes are an everyday wonder at the table

BY DAVID PLOTNIKOFF PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI, JAMES OSELAND, AND BARBARA RIES







**W**HILE MUCH OF my neighborhood in the foothills south of San Francisco has been overrun by pink stucco McMansions, there are still places where the wild things grow. A little over a year ago, driving down a winding canyon road at dusk, I rounded a blind curve and encountered a deer, standing just off to the side of the road in thick underbrush, devouring what appeared to be an artichoke. Was this the progeny of a rogue plant that had gone wild a hundred years ago, when this part of California produced most of the nation's artichokes?

The artichoke, cultivated since the dawn of recorded history, remains just a half step removed from wildness. Take a classic globe artichoke gone to seed, let nature run its course for a couple of seasons, and the result will be indistinguishable from what that deer was chewing on: a woody thistle with fierce, talonlike barbs. In effect, seeing an artichoke in the supermarket is not so different from seeing a coyote trotting through the Westminster Kennel Club.

Artichokes hold a singular place in my culinary lexicon—comforting and familiar yet exotic and mysterious. Growing up here, in the temperate coastal zone of Northern California, not too far from where most domestic artichokes are now cultivated, I took the vegetable as a given. The perennial green globe—the kind you find in almost any grocery store in the United States—was a Golden State birthright, up there with being able to wear shorts in December. The big, meaty artichokes on my family table were served in an unpretentious style: steamed, pulled apart leaf by leaf, each leaf dipped in melted but-

ter or Best Foods mayonnaise and pulled through clenched teeth to scrape away the flavorful flesh, until all that was left was the succulent heart.

Today, the artichoke is a local talisman that I share with every out-of-state visitor. I have a favorite day trip, on a curvy road through the redwoods and out to the beach, that includes a pit stop in the town of Pescadero, where Duarte's Tavern has been ladling up an unspeakably decadent cream of artichoke soup for more than 50 years. Mop it up with half a loaf of warm sourdough bread, and you have something verging on a religious awakening. In my own kitchen, the dinner pairing that speaks the most eloquently of home is steamed artichokes with

**THERE IS A SUBLIME TEXTURE TO A PERFECTLY STEAMED ARTICHOKE HEART: FIRM YET CREAMY IN A WAY THAT CAN BE DESCRIBED ONLY AS CONFECTIONARY**

dungeness crab bought live off the boats at Pillar Point Harbor. The beauty is in the simplicity: any cook who can boil water can make this dish. The tastes are so pure and well defined that the only things necessary to accentuate them are lemon and butter.

There is a sublime texture to a perfectly steamed artichoke heart: firm yet creamy in a way that can best be described as confectionary. Should that not be enough, consider that artichokes are a platform for every guilty pleasure from prosciutto to hollandaise sauce. Few foods can be so earthy and so elevated at the same time.

Which is not to overlook the

**Pickers near Castroville, California, right. Previous pages, from left: braised baby artichokes (see recipe on page 75); a Lyon artichoke, one of several lesser-known varieties becoming more widely available in the U.S.**









## ARTICHOKES



prickly truth: at first blush, this primordial flower—a member of the species *Cynara cardunculus* and a cousin of the wild cardoon (a thistle that has been domesticated and harvested for its stalk and heart)—looks like an armadillo, hiding its beauty behind rows of armor plates. Those spiky leaves are actually the immature bloom's petals, called bracts; they're inedible in larger plants, except for the bract's fleshy bottom portion. Just above where the stalk meets the flower resides the bud's meaty, edible base, or heart. The heart serves as the receptacle for the plant's inedible immature florets, called the choke, which must be scooped away—except in the case of smaller artichokes, whose chokes can be eaten. And, though it's ignored by many cooks, the portion of the stalk that's left attached to some fresh artichokes, especially those sold at farmers' markets, is delicious, too. I simply

where all sorts of varieties of the vegetable are cultivated and consumed in abundance—the white tudelas of Spain, the violet midis of southern France, the cylindrical catanese of Italy, and many more (see “9 Artichoke Varieties”, page 69, for descriptions of some of the kinds available in the United States). What's more, in places like Rome, Damascus, Athens, and Cairo, steaming or boiling is just the beginning. The historic canon of artichoke recipes is full of preparations both simple and elaborate that have been savored since antiquity. The vegetables can be fried whole (for a Roman preparation called *alla giudia*), stuffed with seasoned bread crumbs and baked (an Italian-American favorite), stewed with garlic (an Egyptian dish called *kharsouf bi zeit*), simmered and served with preserved lemon and honey (a dish of Moroccan origin that can be eaten hot or cold), roasted with rosemary-infused lamb and potatoes (popular in Greece), sautéed in an omelette (a Greek and Syrian favorite), and cooked with fava beans (a springtime treat all over the Mediterranean).

Artichokes are perennials that will yield a crop in the spring (and, usually, a smaller one in the fall) for five to ten years, until the plant completes its life cycle. In parts of the world where artichokes are grown, the food is one of the earliest and most eagerly awaited heralds of winter's end. “Growing up in Cairo, we had *so* many artichokes in the spring,” said Claudia Roden, the expert on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cooking, when I called her at

## THE ARTICHOKE, A HERALD OF SPRING, IS POSITIVELY SACRED IN MIDDLE EASTERN AND MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

peel the tough skin off the stem, slice it, and steam it along with my whole artichokes. That's what I find so intriguing about this unique vegetable, with its mellow sweetness like that of ripe fruit: its charms reveal themselves so readily to any cook willing to get past its barbed exterior.

IF THE ARTICHOKE is cherished in the part of the world where I live, it is positively sacred in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries,

DAVID PLOTNIKOFF's *most recent article for SAVEUR was “One-Man Show” (January/February 2009).*

**Left, from top, a vendor selling artichokes, stalks and all, at a farmers' market in Sicily; stuffed artichokes (see recipe on page 75). Facing page, fettuccine with artichokes and chicken (see recipe on page 75).**













## ARTICHOKES

## 9 ARTICHOKE VARIETIES

Scores of different artichoke cultivars—encompassing a wide range of sizes, shapes, and colors—are available outside the United States. Here, by contrast, a single variety has dominated the market since the 1920s: the big, round California green globe. But in recent years California growers like Steve Jordan of Baroda Farms, in the town of Lompoc, have started to change that. Since 1986, Jordan has been developing domestic cultivars based on artichoke varieties commonly found in Italy and France. Some of the varieties Jordan grows work well as annuals, which are planted anew from seed each year and are not subject to the rigid spring-fall harvest cycle that governs perennials like the classic green globe, which comes from a single plant that is cultivated year after year. All nine specimens shown here—some perennials, some grown from seed—came from Baroda Farms. (See page 96 for information on contacting the company.) —Karen Shimizu

① Light red and only roughly one inch in diameter when fully grown, the purple **baby anzio** is a relative of the romanesco artichoke of the Lazio region of Italy. Like many baby artichokes, baby anzios can be cooked and eaten whole.

② Developed in the mid-1980s by a California grower named Rusty Jordan, the **big heart** is aptly named. It is endowed with a large, fleshy base and weighs in at over a pound. This green, 3 1/2–5 1/2" giant—the first patented annual artichoke grown from seed—is excellent for stuffing.

③ The **classic green globe**, sometimes called just the globe, has a buttery-tasting heart and bottom and an ample amount of meat at the base of the petals. This artichoke, which ranges in size from three to five inches in diameter and was traditionally cultivated as

a perennial, was originally brought to California from Italy but is similar in shape and flavor to the French *camus de bretagne*, a summer choke grown in Brittany.

④ The oblong **siena**, about four inches in diameter and born of a breeding program in central Italy, has a small choke and a wine red color. Slow to mature and still grown in relatively small quantities, this small artichoke usually weighs less than a pound and has a heart tender enough to be eaten raw.

⑤ The petite **mercury**, with its red-violet hue and distinctive rounded top, is sweeter than many other artichokes and is usually three and a half inches in diameter. Like the baby anzio, the mercury is derived from the Italian romanesco.

⑥ The dense and rotund **omaha** artichoke (up to six inches wide) owes its striking appearance to its sharply tapered red-and-green leaves. The omaha is less bitter than many artichoke varieties.

⑦ The two-inch-wide **fiesole** artichoke has a fruity flavor and a deep wine color that does not fade with cooking. Bred from the violetta de provence, a purple variety native to southern France, the flesole has a comparatively tender stalk that can be quickly steamed and eaten.

⑧ The **chianti**, a classically shaped, four-inch-wide green artichoke with a touch of maroon on the leaves, also (like the mercury) traces its lineage to the iconic Italian romanesco.

⑨ The blocky and vividly colored **king** has distinctive green spots at the tips of its leaves. Usually four inches in diameter and bred from romanesco varieties mixed with other Italian artichoke strains, the king typically weighs more than a pound in peak season.

her present-day home in London to talk 'chokes. "In season, we had vendors coming to our kitchen door with huge crates of big artichokes. We'd stew some of them in olive oil to eat right away, and we'd preserve others in salt and oil to have them year-round." Today, she said, she often buys the excellent frozen Egyptian artichokes that she finds in stores in London all year long; she's been using them lately to make Spanish-style stewed artichokes with prawns and boiled artichokes served with a "pesto" of parsley and lemon. Still, Roden told me, she will always think of artichokes as a deeply seasonal ingredient.

BOTANISTS HYPOTHEZIZE that artichokes may have first been cultivated in Sicily as early as 300 B.C.; the Greeks and the Romans are said to have enjoyed eating them with honey and vinegar. North African farmers refined cultivated versions of the plant during the ninth and tenth centuries, and Arab traders spread them across the Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages. By the time of the Renaissance, the vegetable had become a cornerstone ingredient in French and Italian cookery. (The English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese words for artichoke are all derived from the Arabic word for the plant, *al khurshuf*.)

Cultivars from France and Spain were brought to the United States in the early 1800s and were first cultivated commercially in Louisiana and California. But it wasn't until nearly a century later, when Italian immigrants in San Mateo County, in Northern California, found artichokes to be well suited to the region's sandy coastal soil and temperate climate, that commercial cultivation began on a large scale. In 1921, some of those farmers introduced artichokes a hundred or so miles south, in Monterey County, which now produces nearly 75 percent of the

46,000 tons of fresh artichokes consumed in this country each year. (Most of the rest come from elsewhere in California.) Virtually all of them are marketed as "green globes", "globes", or just "artichokes".

Which is not to say that it's impossible to grow artichokes in this country outside California. I was surprised to learn that two Maine farmers, Barbara Damosch and Eliot Coleman, have been growing organic artichokes on their Four Season Farm since the late 1960s. They work with a cultivar called imperial star, growing 300 plants from seed planted in February and harvesting 2,500 to 3,000 artichokes as a late-summer crop; they sell their product at their farm stand and to local restaurants. "People are always sur-

**WHAT IS SO INTRIGUING ABOUT THIS UNIQUE VEGETABLE IS THAT ITS CHARMS REVEAL THEMSELVES READILY TO ANY COOK WILLING TO GET PAST ITS EXTERIOR**

prised to be able to order a Maine artichoke," Coleman says.

Still, with the exception of small-scale operations like Damosch and Coleman's, artichoke farming in the United States is essentially a monoculture (that is, dedicated to a single crop or, in this case, a variety of crop). "People from the Mediterranean would be very amused by what we consider to be artichokes here," Nancy Harmon Jenkins, author of the recently updated *The New Mediterranean Diet* (Bantam, 2009), told me, noting that in Italy alone dozens of varieties are available at produce markets. "It's not that they wouldn't recognize them. They'd just be surprised by the fact that we have just this one variety." The closest (continued on page 73)







## 6 QUICK PREPS

With their subtle flavor and toothy texture, artichokes lend themselves to all sorts of fast, simple preparations. Here are six of our favorites.

① Whether cooked over coals or under a broiler, halved **grilled baby artichokes** have a delicate yet concentrated flavor and a crisp exterior; we like to anoint them with olive oil and add a squeeze of lemon and a pinch of crunchy salt while they're still hot. ② A refreshing side dish, a **raw artichoke salad** unites the pleasantly bitter flavor of thinly sliced raw baby artichoke hearts with the clean taste of torn mint leaves and the nuttiness of shaved parmesan. ③ One of our favorite ways to use tangy marinated artichokes is for **crostini**; just spread some creamy mascarpone or ricotta cheese on a piece of toasted country bread that's been rubbed with a bruised garlic clove, then toss the artichoke hearts on top and garnish with snipped chives. ④ A staple of Southern garden club and church luncheons, the **tea sandwich** takes on a more satisfying dimension with the addition of canned artichokes; simply cut the crusts off sliced dark bread and slather it with a homemade spread of canned artichokes pulsed in a food processor with some mayonnaise. ⑤ We always try to keep a jar of **home-marinated artichokes** on hand for pasta dishes or omelettes. We also love to make our own with frozen artichoke hearts tossed in olive oil and a generous pinch each of dried thyme, oregano, and crushed red chile flakes. ⑥ **Whole steamed artichokes** are an everyday delicacy that requires nothing more than steaming the whole vegetable and carrying it to the table with your dipping sauce of choice (see page 77 for some of our favorite sauces). —Hunter Lewis

**W** Detailed recipes for these preparations at [SAVEUR.COM/ARTICHOKES](http://SAVEUR.COM/ARTICHOKES)



②



③



④



⑤



⑥



## TRIMMING TIPS

Some cooks prefer to cook large artichokes before trimming, but the following technique makes precooking unnecessary. The trick is to use a knife to cut away the leaves instead of plucking them off by hand. (See page 92 for tips on trimming baby artichokes.) —Ben Mims

① Use a serrated blade to cut away the top of the leaves about halfway between the tip and the base.

② Hold the artichoke with the stem pointed toward you and make a shallow vertical cut into the artichoke. Then, holding the blade of the knife at an angle, rotate the artichoke, moving the knife in between the tough, outer green leaves and the tender, inner yellow leaves so that the tough green ones fall away.

③ Remove any stray outer leaves by snapping them off at the base. With a small paring knife, trim away any remaining green patches from the exposed inner leaves.

④ Cut away the remaining leaves a half inch above where they meet the base of the artichoke.

⑤ Remove the green outer layer of the stem and base using a vegetable peeler. Cut off the bottom half inch of the stem and trim away any remaining green parts from the underside of the base.

⑥ Insert a spoon into the fuzzy choke at the center of the artichoke and scrape firmly along base and rim to scoop out all the fibers.

⑦ Run a paring knife vertically along the outer edge of the base to remove any remaining leaf stubs.

⑧ To prevent oxidation, rub the surface of the artichoke base with the cut side of a lemon. Or, place trimmed hearts in water mixed with lemon juice until ready to use.



①



②



③



④



⑤



⑥



⑦



⑧



## ARTICHOKES

(continued from page 69) many American cooks get to international varieties is by buying the many types of bottled and frozen hearts, which are imported primarily from Chile, Peru, and Spain (see “Packaged, Naturally”, page 77).

IN CALIFORNIA, the green globe remains king, and it's central to the civic identity of Monterey County's artichoke country, particularly the town of Castroville, the self-proclaimed “Artichoke Center of the World”. The town's artichoke farms are tightly concentrated along the coastal fog belt, which has a microclimate of very mild winters and cool summers, comprising a narrow strip of land bisected by Highway 1. On a recent visit, I pulled off the road and cruised, windows down, along the sandy dirt roads between the artichoke fields. I was close enough to the ocean to smell it and sometimes even feel it on my cheeks.

I'd come to Castroville during the spring harvest to talk with Michael Scattini, a 39-year-old artichoke farmer who works many of the same fields that were tended by his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. I met up with Scattini at his Ocean Ranch Lot 4, a wedge of rich alluvial soil between the ocean and the Salinas River. The harvest, Scattini told me as we drove in his pickup truck deep into the field, still depends on hand labor. Sure enough, I could see 60 or so field workers in high rubber boots and hooded sweatshirts, flipping artichokes over their shoulders into red canvas bags on their backs. When they got to the end of a row, each crew member dumped 75 pounds of artichokes onto a long trailer that functioned as a mobile packing shed. Then they headed back into the muddy, knee-deep furrows for another pass.

**Right, from top, artichoke and potato hash, a perfect accompaniment to grilled skirt steak (see recipe on page 76); workers loading freshly picked green globes onto a trailer in Castroville, California.**

We got out of Scattini's truck, and he grabbed hold of a plant. “See the thin leaf coming off the top here?” Scattini said, plucking a feathery piece near the top of the stalk. “That's what's called a rooster plume. When you see those, the bud is starting to expose itself. You know you're getting close to harvest, two or three weeks out.” Ultimately, the size of the largest buds and their tightness tell him when to pick a field. The size of the harvested artichoke depends on its position on the stalk, with the largest, “terminal” bud at the top of the plant, the secondary buds near the middle of the stalk, and the smallest buds (which are sold as baby artichokes) nearest the ground. Scattini told me that the softball-size artichokes from the top of the plant are far more popular with consumers than the golf ball-size ones from farther down. “Hey, this is America,” he

**I SAUTÉED A FRESH ARTICHOKE HEART IN OLIVE OIL, TOASTED SOME HOMEMADE BREAD, AND SAID TO MYSELF, IT'S SPRING IN CALIFORNIA. I'M HOME**

said. “Bigger is better, right?”

Indeed, Castroville's spring artichokes are round and meaty, in noticeable contrast to the secondary fall crop, which consists exclusively of comparatively small, pine cone-shaped buds. In recent years, wild price swings arising from imbalances in supply and demand for the big green globes has prompted Scattini and the 23 other growing companies that constitute California's artichoke industry to find a way to level the peaks and valleys of the



ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (9); BOTTOM RIGHT: STEPHANIE MAZE/CORBIS







## ARTICHOKES

annual harvest cycle dictated by this perennial plant. Scattini now devotes 10 percent of his acreage to the development of a new variety of globe artichoke that can be cultivated from new seed and grown to full size almost year-round as an annual (as opposed to a perennial, which must be given time to grow back season after season).

On my way out of Castroville the next day, I could see Scattini's crew working another set of fields. The pickers looked like ladybugs inching their way across an expanse of silver-green corduroy. The spring harvest and the green globe itself had changed little since Scattini's grandfather worked those fields. It occurred to me that if he and the other local growers were to succeed in their quest for a marketable annual variety, the excitement surrounding early-season artichokes could vanish. All over the artichoke-loving world, the first sight of the vegetable in the markets is a cause for celebration. It is an event. Here, by economic necessity, the growers are working hard to make seasonality irrelevant. Pondering the irony, I wandered down the deep furrows of one of Scattini's fields until I found what I deemed to be a perfect green globe: a gigantic specimen that was flawless in every regard. Surely, the farmer would not miss one.

Back at my home in the Bay Area that evening, my wife saw the gigantic artichoke sitting alone on the cutting board and asked, "Is that your muse?" After the disassembly rite, the heart was about the size of a generous hamburger patty. I sautéed it in olive oil, browned two thick pieces of homemade bread in the pan, and added a slice of aged provolone. It was a sandwich with a message. *It is spring in coastal California, it said. You are home.*

**Facing page, greens and artichokes stew (see recipe on page 76).**

**G**REEN GLOBE ARTICHOKES—the variety that is the most readily available in this country—will work well for all the dishes shown on this page and the following pages, as will many other kinds (see page 69 for descriptions of some of the types now sold in the United States). In any of the following dishes, using red or purple artichokes instead of green ones will make for a dramatically different color palette.



## BRAISED ARTICHOKES

SERVES 4

These tender, herbed baby artichokes are delicious on their own as a side dish or as a component of dozens of other dishes, from pizzas and pastas to salads and frittatas.

- 1 lemon, thinly sliced crosswise into rounds
- 20 baby artichokes (about 2½ lbs.)
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. dry vermouth
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves

① Fill a 3-qt. high-sided skillet with 6 cups water and add lemon slices. Trim away tough outer leaves of the artichokes to expose their tender, pale green interior. (For illustrated, step-by-step instructions on trimming baby artichokes, see page 92.) Add trimmed artichokes to the skillet.

② Add the oil, vermouth, salt, pepper, fennel seeds, thyme, and bay leaves. Cover the skillet and bring liquid to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer the artichokes until tender, 30–40 minutes. Serve artichokes at once or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.



## STUFFED ARTICHOKES

SERVES 4

This recipe is based on one that *SAVEUR* deputy editor Dana Bowen's Italian-American family has used for generations.

- 4 large, full-size artichokes
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1¾ cups dried bread crumbs
- 1 cup grated pecorino
- ⅓ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

① Using a serrated knife, cut off artichoke stems to create a flat bottom. Cut top thirds off artichokes, pull off tough outermost leaves, and trim tips of leaves with kitchen shears. Rub cut parts with lemon halves. Open artichoke leaves with your thumbs to make room for stuffing; set aside.

② Heat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, combine bread crumbs, ¾ cup pecorino, parsley, salt, pepper, and garlic. Working with one artichoke at a time over bowl, sprinkle one-quarter of bread crumb mixture over the artichoke and work it in between leaves. Transfer stuffed artichoke to a shallow baking dish. Drizzle each artichoke with 1 tbsp. oil. Pour in boiling water to a depth of 1". Rub 1 tbsp. olive oil

on a sheet of aluminum foil, cover artichokes with foil (oiled side down), and secure foil tightly around dish with kitchen twine. Bake until a knife easily slides into the base of an artichoke, about 45 minutes. Remove foil, sprinkle tops with remaining cheese, and switch oven to broil. Broil until tops of artichokes are golden brown, about 3 minutes.



## FETTUCCINE WITH ARTICHOKES AND CHICKEN

SERVES 4

We got this satisfying pasta dish from Justin Smillie, the chef at Smith's, a restaurant in New York City. For the chunky, woodsy-tasting sauce, he braises artichoke hearts with chicken, dried porcini mushrooms, and fresh tarragon.

## Juice of 1 lemon

- 15 baby artichokes (about 2 lbs.)
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 dried mushrooms, such as porcini, chopped (about ⅓ oz.)
- 1 small carrot, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 1 lb.), cut into 1" chunks
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- 4 tbsp. chopped tarragon leaves
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 lb. dried fettuccine
- ¾ cup grated parmesan

① Stir lemon juice into a medium bowl filled with water. Trim away tough outer leaves of the artichokes to expose their tender, pale green



## ARTICHOKES

interior. (For illustrated, step-by-step instructions on trimming baby artichokes, see page 92.) Put trimmed artichokes into lemon water; set aside.

2 Heat the oil in a dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, mushrooms, and carrots and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, about 8 minutes. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and add the chicken and tomato paste; cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Add the vinegar and cook, stirring constantly, until liquid has evaporated, about 1 minute. Drain the artichokes and add them, along with 2 tbsp. tarragon and the chicken broth, to the pot. Bring broth to a boil and

reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until chicken and artichokes are very tender and the broth has reduced by half, about 40 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and set sauce aside.

3 Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta and cook until al dente, about 7 minutes. Reserve 1 cup pasta water. Drain pasta and transfer to pot with artichoke and chicken sauce; set over high heat. Bring sauce to a boil, stir in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup parmesan and cook, tossing occasionally with tongs, until sauce thickens and clings to pasta, about 2 minutes. (If sauce is too dry, pour in a little pasta water.) Add remaining tarragon and season with salt and pepper. Transfer pasta to 4 bowls and sprinkle with remaining parmesan.



### SKIRT STEAK WITH ARTICHOKES AND POTATO HASH

SERVES 4

This recipe is based on one from David Tanis, the author of *A Platter of Figs* (Artisan, 2008) and the chef at Chez Pannise in Berkeley, California.

- 2 lbs. skirt steak, cut into 4 portions
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup plus 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lbs. medium potatoes, such as yellow finn or yukon gold, peeled and cut into 1" chunks
- 15 baby artichokes (about 2 lbs.)
- 2 lemons, halved
- 1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. capers
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 Season steaks with salt and pepper. Massage steaks with 2 tbsp. oil. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

2 Bring 6 cups salted water to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan. Transfer potatoes to boiling water, reduce heat to medium, and simmer until almost tender, about 4 minutes. Drain potatoes; transfer to a baking sheet; let cool.

3 Trim away tough outer leaves of artichokes to expose their tender, pale green interior. (For illustrated, step-by-step instructions on trimming baby artichokes, see page 92.) Slice artichokes lengthwise into  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick wedges. Rub artichokes with the cut sides of the halved lemons; set aside.

4 Heat  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup oil in a 12" cast-iron

skillet over medium-high heat. Add potatoes and cook, flipping occasionally with a metal spatula, until they are light brown, about 10 minutes. Add artichokes and cook, flipping occasionally, until artichokes and potatoes are golden brown and tender, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add parsley, capers, and garlic. Stir to combine and set hash aside off heat.

5 Heat remaining oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat or prepare a medium-hot charcoal fire in a grill. Add steak and cook, flipping once with tongs, until seared, crusty, and medium rare, 6–8 minutes. Transfer to a platter and let sit for 5 minutes. Slice steak against the grain, divide between 4 plates, and squeeze the lemon halves over steaks. Serve with the hash.



### GREENS AND ARTICHOKES STEW

SERVES 4

The recipe for this dish, a springtime favorite in the Middle East, comes from Greg and Lucy Malouf, the authors of *Turquoise* (Chronicle, 2008).

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup plus 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 large, full-size artichoke hearts with stems quartered (see page 72 for step-by-step trimming instructions)
- 8 shallots, halved
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tsp. poppy seeds
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground sumac, plus more for garnish (optional; see page 96)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. hot paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. curly endive, roots trimmed
- 8 oz. swiss chard, stemmed and

### THE WINE QUESTION

Of all the ingredients you can pair with wine, the artichoke surely comes with the biggest "Thou shalt not" staring the would-be sommelier in the face. I've heard the alarmist claims: "Don't drink wine with artichokes!" "Only water goes with artichokes!" And I can confidently say, It's all bosh. In fact, the flavor of water responds to artichokes in exactly the same way that the flavor of wine does, and, once you understand that interaction, you can contrive to drink anything you darned well please with artichokes.

At the heart of the matter is a naturally occurring acid called cynarin, a chemical component of all artichokes. Savvy sommeliers have long been hip to the fact that cynarin causes people who are eating an artichoke to perceive a little sweetness in the very next bite or gulp of anything. This curious property—far from messing up the wine-with-food equation—actually gives the matcher a huge advantage. Finding the right wine always comes down to understanding the interplay of a few basic gustatory qualities: sweetness, dryness, acidity, bitterness, tannin level. No other food gives you the head start that artichokes give you: the matcher knows that any prospective wine for artichokes is going to taste sweeter next to the food. What's so perplexing about that?

When choosing a wine to go with artichokes, then, do not choose an off-dry riesling, which is going to taste like a sweet riesling (unless you want a sweet riesling with your artichoke). And do not choose a 1961 Château Latour from Bordeaux, whose exquisite balance is going to be tipped by an artichoke. Do choose a wine that can get a boost from an enhanced impression of sweetness. Formidably dry no-dosage champagnes (which are made without added sugar), like Laurent-Perrier Ultra-Brut, pair brilliantly with artichokes, as do some of the more famously austere rosés from southern France, like those of the Tavel appellation. There are also wines from the Republic of Georgia—made from relatively obscure grape varieties like mtsvane and kisi—that are beautifully softened and romanced by artichokes. And if reds are your thing, take heart: they too can love the thistle! Look for something like a very dry barbera from the Piedmont region of Italy; its fear-some acidity will be civilized by the cynarin interaction.

I suppose it bears mentioning that the concentration of cynarin is the strongest in the artichoke leaves and the weakest in the artichoke's bottom, or heart, and perhaps there are sommeliers out there who, when asked to pick a wine for pairing with artichokes, respond by asking, "Bottom or leaves?" As far as I'm concerned, that's unnecessarily complicating a perfectly simple equation. —David Rosengarten



## ARTICHOKES

thinly sliced lengthwise

## 1 lemon, quartered

① Heat  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup oil in a 6-qt. dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add artichokes and shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until light brown, about 10 minutes. Season with salt, add poppy seeds, sumac, paprika, and pepper, and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add 6 cups water and bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, until artichokes and shallots are tender, about 15 minutes. Add greens and cook, stirring once, until wilted, about 2 minutes.

② Season stew with more salt to taste. Using a slotted spoon, transfer greens to 4 shallow bowls. Top greens with shallots and artichoke hearts. Ladle  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup broth over vegetables; serve remaining broth on the side. Drizzle with remaining oil and squeeze a lemon wedge over each. Garnish with more sumac, if you like.



## CREAM OF ARTICHOKE SOUP

SERVES 6

This recipe is based on a comforting dish served at Duarte's Tavern in Pescadero, California.

- 2 lbs. frozen artichoke hearts, thawed and roughly chopped
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cornstarch
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 1 lemon, cut into 6 wedges

Sourdough bread, for serving

① Working in batches, purée 2 cups artichoke hearts with 2 cups water in a blender. Transfer puréed artichokes to a 6-qt. pot with the butter, chicken broth, garlic, and salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, for 1 hour. (Stir soup occasionally so the soup at the bottom of the pot doesn't scorch.)

② In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cold water. Vigorously whisk cornstarch mixture and heavy cream into soup. Raise heat to medium-high and cook, whisking frequently, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Strain soup through a mesh strainer into a clean pot over low heat; discard solids. Ladle soup into 6 bowls, garnish with parsley, and squeeze a lemon wedge over each. Serve with warm sourdough bread.



## LEMON AÏOLI

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Steamed artichokes are delicious when eaten with drawn butter, a vinaigrette, or—for a more exciting pairing—any of the following dipping sauces. (Pictured above, clockwise from top left: lemon aïoli, chimichurri, tarator sauce, and pepper and coriander brown butter sauce.)

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp. dijon mustard
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup olive or grapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- Kosher salt, to taste

Into the bowl of a food processor, put the egg yolk and mustard, and pulse to combine. Turn food processor on and slowly drizzle in the oil in a thin

stream until sauce is thick and creamy. Stir in lemon juice and salt. (For a thinner aïoli, sprinkle in 1 tbsp. water and process to combine.)

## CHIMICHURRI

MAKES ABOUT 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  CUPS

- 3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped cilantro
- Kosher salt, to taste

Combine the vinegar and garlic in a small bowl; let sit for 20 minutes. Stir in olive oil, parsley, and cilantro. Season with salt.

## TARATOR SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- 4 cloves garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup tahini
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Kosher salt, to taste

In the bowl of a food processor, pulse garlic until finely chopped. Add tahini, lemon juice, parsley, and 3 tbsp. water; pulse to combine. Season with salt.

## PEPPER AND CORIANDER BROWN BUTTER SAUCE

MAKES  $\frac{1}{2}$  CUP

- 1 tbsp. cracked black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp. cracked coriander seeds
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- Kosher salt, to taste

In an 8" skillet over medium-high heat, toast the peppercorns and coriander, swirling constantly, until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Add the butter and cook until deep brown and foamy, about 4 minutes. Stir in vinegar and salt. Serve warm.

*A recipe for artichokes and broad beans at [SAVEUR.COM/ARTICHOKES](http://SAVEUR.COM/ARTICHOKES)*

## PACKAGED, NATURALLY

For a generation of home cooks, making dishes with artichokes meant opening a jar of Cara Mia marinated California artichoke hearts. They added a piquant flourish to omelettes or pasta sauces, sat nicely atop canapés, and gave iceberg lettuce salads a worldly air. Cara Mia artichokes are still around (though they now come from Spain, as do many packaged artichokes sold in the United States), and canned and jarred artichoke hearts remain a pantry staple. Almost all of them present a challenge to cooks who want their artichokes to taste like, well, artichokes. Whether they're "natural" (usually preserved in water, salt, and citric acid) or marinated (usually in sunflower oil or soybean oil and vinegar and herbs), the canned vegetables tend to taste of the brine in which they are preserved.

Lately, though, a tasty middle way between fresh and canned has emerged: Monterey Farms, located on California's Central Coast, offers cooked, ready-to-use hearts from locally grown, freshly picked green globe artichokes. The artichoke hearts from Monterey Farms are taken from relatively small, tender green globes and are hand-trimmed a day or two after they're picked.

The hearts are quick-steamed, rubbed with lemon juice and olive oil (though an herbed version, shown, and a grilled one are available), and vacuum-sealed. Fresh tasting and firm, the company's ArtiHearts, as the product is called, retain the sweet complexity of fresh hearts. You can buy packaged and trimmed uncooked fresh hearts, too: Epicure Farms, also in California, sells green globe hearts raw. And frozen artichoke hearts are yet another option; Trader Joe's sells frozen uncooked hearts that work splendidly in stews and sauces. (See THE PANTRY, page 96, for a source for Monterey Farms artichokes.) —K.S.





# Little *Big* Island

THE *MENEHUNE* HAD A BROKEN FOOT. It was the first thing I noticed about the black lava carving, perched in a display cabinet at a junk shop near my home in upstate New York. Because it was imperfect, I hesitated to buy this chipped statue of a little Hawaiian imp, lying prone with one hand resting on a tangled mop of hair, his pointy ears partly exposed, a wan smile on his face. What in heaven's name are you doing here, so far from home? I wondered. Figurines like this one, carved in the 1960s by an artist who signed his pieces "Coco Joe", are collectible relics of Hawaiian Tiki culture, but where I live, no one had a clue as to its value. I also knew that Hawaiians are a superstitious lot; many believe that native lava should remain on the islands and not wind up in a remote corner of the Northeast, blasted

**John Keolanui, right, serves Hawaiian cowboy beef stew (see recipe on page 86), made with beef from cattle raised on Hawaii's Big Island.**

Real local cooking abounds on Hawaii's southernmost isle

by SHANE MITCHELL

photographs by BARBARA RIES







## HAWAII

by lake-effect snowstorms. In fact, every year hotels like the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows, on Hawaii's Big Island, receive numerous packages of rock shipped back from all over the world.

Perhaps it was providence that I'd just received an invitation from my friend Danny Akaka to attend Twilight, a monthly festival featuring Hawaiian musicians and storytellers that he hosts on the Big Island. Since it was damned cold outside, and because now there was this broken *menehune* begging to see the tropics again, I forked over 30 bucks for it and went home to book a flight.

STUCK IN THE PACIFIC, some 2,100 miles from the U.S. mainland, Hawaii (as the Big Island itself is officially known) is the largest and southernmost of the six main islands that make up the namesake U.S. state. Settled by

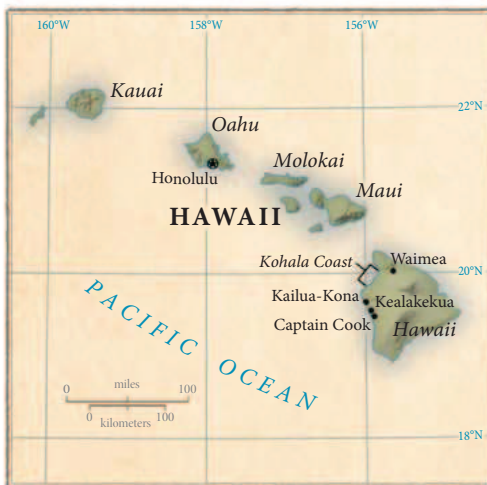
Polynesians who ventured from the Marquesas Islands some 1,700 years ago, when outrigger canoes bearing breadfruit, taro, pigs, and chickens made landfall there, the Big Island has managed to retain, arguably more than the other, more heavily toured parts of the archipelago, the eclectic culinary collage that has come to define what Hawaiians eat.

Eating local on the Big Island was exhilarating, especially as I came to understand the food's underpinnings. "There are few places in the world where the creation of a cuisine is so transparently visible," writes the culinary historian Rachel Laudan in her chronicling of Hawaiian foodways *The Food of Paradise* (University of Hawaii Press, 1996). And sure enough, on any given plate placed before me by an islander, I could almost always identify two or three well-defined culinary traditions. Laudan says that the ways Hawaiians cook and eat are the result of three distinct waves of settle-

**A typical Hawaiian backyard barbecue can include everything from Philippine pig roast and Japanese miso-marinated swordfish to macaroni salad**

On my first trips to the island, I was introduced to an array of foods that tasted both familiar and exotic. I went to plenty of restaurants that served orthodox versions of Japanese preparations like sashimi and sushi, for example, but at the next table over I'd see locals eating something called poke (pronounced POH-kay), which was similar yet different: irregular chunks of raw fish topped with sea salt, seaweed, ground nuts, and other seasonings like chopped green onions and chile flakes. At an unpretentious diner where I liked to have lunch, fried chicken and hamburgers were on the menu, but most of the customers were ordering loco moco—two scoops of rice topped with a hamburger patty and a fried egg and then slathered in gravy—or a "plate lunch" of chicken or steak teriyaki with a maki roll, macaroni salad, and custard

Contributing editor SHANE MITCHELL's most recent article for SAVEUR was "Better Than Butter" (January/February 2009).







**A road traversing the Big Island's grassy uplands, above. Facing page, from far left, in the edible garden of islander Amanda Rieux; miso-glazed fish (see recipe on page 86).**

ment: that of the original Polynesian seafarers, followed by the arrival of Europeans in the late 18th century, and, starting in the 1800s, the migration of thousands of workers from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Portuguese island colonies, and Southeast Asia, who worked the islands' burgeoning sugarcane, coffee, and fruit plantations.

From these diasporas a few culinary constants emerged: an appetite for fish, first and

foremost (Hawaiians consume twice as much fish per capita as U.S. mainlanders); a love of meat, especially beef, which has been raised on the Big Island since the explorer George Vancouver introduced cattle there in 1793; and a knack for pairing disparate foods and flavors—which is what happens when migrants from all over the world end up eating together day after day on one of the most isolated chunks of volcanic rock in the world. Today, the Big Island's foodways are still a reflection of those culinary intersections, with the addition of mainland-oriented tastes for things like mayonnaise and canned meats, as well as the recent embrace of newcomers to the local pantry like island-grown

mushrooms, mesclun, Peruvian sweet potatoes, and edible lavender, all of which show up at the farmers' markets in the Big Island towns of Waimea and Hilo.

Despite its geographic remove from the mainland and its crazy-quilt epicurean pedigree, the Big Island still reminds me of a friendly, if somewhat mythical, county in the middle of rural America where big, family-style meals remain sacred. Over the years, I've been drawn to the island by the sun, to be sure, but even more so by a dining culture that celebrates its diversity with good humor and huge portions. To find these home-cooked affairs, it helps to know someone local. The first *(continued on page 84)*



HAWAII









(continued from page 81) time I met Kaniela “Danny” Akaka Jr., back in 1998, at the restaurant of a hotel on the island called the Manago, he played the ukulele without irony and told me where to find the best pork chops. It made us fast friends.

Over time, the Big Island has come to feel like another home to me, and I’ve gradually come to think of Danny, who helped guide my recovery after my sister died five years ago, as my Dalai Lama in flip-flops. Since my most discerning friends in Honolulu, who would rather be caught naked than wearing an aloha shirt, had often expressed the wish that Twilight took place on their own, traffic-choked isle, I knew to expect a meaningful treat, rather than a cheesy commercial luau with swishy grass skirts and soupy poi, when I landed back in Kona.

ON THE BIG ISLAND locals need to know only two directions. Heading *mauka* (inland) means rising in elevation through broad grasslands where beef cattle graze between the twin peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. Going



**Clockwise from above: the crowd at Twilight; a local fisherman lands a dorado; fried-rice omelette (see recipe on page 87); pickled seaweed salad (see recipe on page 87).**

*makai* (toward the sea) indicates a desire to drop through the brown lava fields rimming the Pacific’s edge. Driving *makai* out of the Kona airport on the morning before Twilight, I am once again mesmerized by the vast spillway of earthen crust—tossed, cracked, crumbled, tubular—that once flowed from the island’s three dormant volcanoes. The Big Island has plenty of coconut palms and sand beaches and macadamia nut groves, but it is this otherworldly





landscape that always resonates with me.

Before meeting Danny at Twilight, I stop for lunch at Teshima's, a restaurant in the town of Kealahou, near the base of Mauna Loa. I'm greeted by the 101-year-old Japanese-American owner, Mary Teshima, who wears a raven black wig and round spectacles and accompanies me to one of the Formica tables. She mentions that her grandson's fishing buddies delivered an ahi tuna to her kitchen door this morning, but, because I'm in the mood for meat, I order the baby back kalbi ribs and, at Mary's insistence, a fried-rice-and-sausage omelette that I recognize as a classic Japanese *izakaya* (pub) dish.

From Kealahou, I drive along Queen Kaa-

humanu Highway to Mauna Lani Bay, where my dirty lava carving finally gets a rinse in the ocean. Then, I skirt two sandy coves where green sea turtles are basking in the shallows, cross over a narrow stone walkway above a sluice inhabited by a moray eel, and, at the southern end of the bay, next to a fishpond called Kalahuipua'a, wind up at an old-fashioned teal green cabin. Known as the Eva Parker Woods Cottage, this one-story Hawaiiana museum becomes the gathering place for Twilight, held once a month on the Saturday closest to the full moon.

When I get there, a boisterous crowd has already transformed the front lawn into an archipelago of beach blankets and woven grass

## THE GUIDE

### Hawaii's Big Island

Dinner for two with drinks and tip:

**Inexpensive** Under \$50 **Moderate** Over \$50

#### WHERE TO STAY

**HILTON WAIKOLOA VILLAGE** 69-425 Waikoloa Beach Drive, Waikoloa (808/886-1234; [www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com](http://www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com)). Rates: \$209-\$699 double. This 62-acre resort on the Big Island's northwestern Kohala Coast offers tours of the island's volcanoes and waterfalls.

**MANAGO HOTEL** 82-6155 Mamalahoa Highway, Captain Cook (808/323-2642; [www.managohotel.com](http://www.managohotel.com)). Rates: \$36-\$78 double. This modest family-run hotel is located in the quiet town of Captain Cook near Kealahou Bay and has both standard rooms and Japanese-style ones, furnished with tatami mats. The hotel's restaurant is a local favorite (see below).

**MAUNA LANI BAY RESORT** 68-1400 Mauna Lani Drive, Kohala Coast (808/885-6682; [www.maunalani.com](http://www.maunalani.com)). Rates: \$455-\$965 double. This beachfront resort has an exceptional Hawaiiana history program and hosts the popular Twilight gathering.

#### WHERE TO EAT

**HAWAIIAN STYLE CAFÉ** 64-1290 Kawaihae Road, Waimea (808/885-4295). **Inexpensive.** Located in a strip mall outside the northern town of Waimea, this diner serves the most generous portions on the Big Island. For lunch, share the Hawaiian Plate, a choice of three local specialties like huli-huli (Hawaiian BBQ) chicken, and don't miss the oxtail soup when it's available.

**MANAGO HOTEL** 82-6155 Mamalahoa Highway, Captain Cook (808/323-2642). **Moderate.** Locals at this communal-style dining room know the daily specials by heart. Try the shrimp sauté, pan-fried pork chops, and miso black cod.

**TESHIMA'S** 79-7251 Mamalahoa Highway, Kealahou (808/322-9140). **Moderate.** This restaurant serves simply prepared Japanese-Hawaiian dishes made with fresh local ingredients. Be sure to try the fried-rice omelette and the sautéed ahi tuna, and save room for a slice of homemade custard pie.



## HAWAII

mats. Barefoot kids wearing swim shorts hop through the tidal pools between the reef and the fishpond. Their parents pop open insulated ice chests packed with the likes of spicy octopus kimchi, chewy squid, and taro leaf salad. The sun is heading for the horizon when a singer named Cecilio Rodriguez starts tuning his acoustic guitar.

I spot Danny, a stocky man of 55 with gray at his temples, leaning against the cabin's doorway. He tells me about how *Twilight* was launched 11 years ago so that Hawaii's most skilled narrators could share their songs and lore. *Twilight*

also gives him an opportunity to peek inside the communal picnic basket. "No one ever comes empty-handed," he says, peering out at the crowd. "Sometimes, when the breeze blows down the mountain, I smell something good out there, and I just want to walk around with my wineglass and a spoon in my back pocket."

When Cecilio Rodriguez steps onto the cabin's front porch and begins crooning the hammy, cheerful "Tiny Bubbles" as a tribute to his late friend Don Ho, I wander through the audience and find my friend Sharon Warren. A white-haired botanical expert who grows avocados

and vanilla orchids in her garden halfway up the western slope of the Hualalai volcano, Sharon has brought a homemade raw ahi poke—glistening red chunks of tuna that she's drizzled with sesame oil and topped with coarse sea salt. From my bag I pull some peppery marlin jerky bought earlier at the KTA supermarket in the town of Kailua-Kona.

As night falls, Cecilio wraps up the performance with a ballad and the last guests pack up their coolers. I walk over to the cabin, where dinner is being readied for the backstage staff. Everyone has brought a traditional dish



### HAWAIIAN COWBOY BEEF STEW

SERVES 6

For this satisfying dish, which comes from islander John Keolanui, we recommend using both beef chuck and short ribs, which add richness.

- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 lbs. beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1" cubes
- 1½ lbs. beef short ribs
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup flour
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 bay leaves
- 10 medium carrots, cut into 2" lengths
- 2½ lbs. medium new potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 5 ribs celery, cut into 1" lengths
- 3 cups cooked long-grain rice, for serving

① Put the tomatoes and their juices into the bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely chopped; set tomatoes aside. Heat oil in a 6-qt. dutch oven over high heat. Season beef chuck

and ribs with salt and pepper. Put flour into a small dish and dredge beef chuck and ribs, shaking off excess flour. Working in 2 batches, sear the beef, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about 8 minutes. With tongs, transfer beef to a plate.

② Add the garlic to the dutch oven and cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, beef, bay leaves, carrots, and 2 cups water. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to low and simmer for 40 minutes. Skim any fat from the surface. Add the potatoes and celery and simmer, uncovered, until the vegetables are tender and the stew has thickened, about 1 hour. Season with salt and pepper. Ladle the stew into 6 bowls and serve with rice.

**Pairing notes** Sicily's COS Cerasuola di Vittoria 2005, a rich blend of nero d'avola and frappato, stands up to the stew's rich flavors.



### MISO-GLAZED FISH

SERVES 4

This easy, delicious preparation for meaty swordfish steaks or mahimahi

filets is based on an entrée served at the communal-style restaurant of the Manago Hotel, on the Big Island's western shore, where the cooks often use butterfish (pictured), a fish named for its silky flesh, which takes well to skillet preparations.

- ½ cup miso
- 2 tbsp. sake
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 4 6 oz. swordfish steaks or mahimahi filets (about 1" thick)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup dried bread crumbs
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

① Place a rack in the middle of the oven; heat to broil. In a small bowl, whisk together the miso, sake, and sugar; set miso sauce aside.

② Lightly season the fish with pepper. Place the bread crumbs in a small baking dish. Coat the fish on each side with bread crumbs; transfer fish to a plate. Heat the oil in a 12" ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Place fish, evenly spaced, in skillet; cook until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Flip and spoon 2 tbsp. miso sauce onto each filet, spreading the sauce over each with the back of a spoon. Transfer the skillet to the oven and broil until miso is golden brown and the fish is cooked through, 5–6 minutes. Divide fish between 4 plates and serve with lemon wedges.



### HAWAIIAN-STYLE KALBI

Soy Sauce–Marinated Ribs

SERVES 4–6

These pork ribs are a sweeter version of a Korean preparation for marinated and grilled short ribs. For more information about rib cuts, see page 89.

- 1¼ cups light brown sugar
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. Asian sesame oil
- ¼ tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 2" piece peeled fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 3 lbs. pork baby back ribs
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced

① Whisk together brown sugar, soy sauce, sesame oil, chile flakes, garlic, ginger, and ¼ cup water in a large bowl. Add the ribs and toss to coat. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let marinate for at least 1 hour at room temperature, or refrigerate overnight, turning occasionally to coat.

② Heat oven to 450°. Remove ribs from marinade and arrange, curved side up, on a rack set over a rimmed foil-lined baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes.




## HAWAII

to pass: sweet potatoes cooked with coconut oil, seaweed with raw onion and sliced tomato, fluffy taro-flour dinner rolls. The Akakas' burly neighbor John Keolanui ladles out a portion of a chunky beef-and-vegetable stew that he's spent all day preparing. Seemingly straight out of an Iowa church luncheon, it's rich with fatty beef from cattle raised in Waimea, on the island's northern side. When John's ten-gallon pot has been scraped clean, Danny starts saying his good-byes, and Anna, Danny's wife, walks over to me and throws a handmade fern-tip lei over my head.

ON MY LAST MORNING in Hawaii, I head back to the shore near Mauna Lani Bay and step onto a ghost walk. Once, the island was ringed with graveled lava trails; sections of those ancient paths still exist in places, especially along the Kona and Kohala coasts. Hawaiians believe they are haunted. I wind up back at Kalahuipua'a pond. For people who have formed an attachment to this spot, it is customary to place a token at water's edge. Some leave pebbles, flowers, poems. Pulling the *menehune* from my purse, I lower him toward the ground but at the last moment

hesitate, too attached to relinquish him. Instead, I respectfully leave Anna's fern lei, now wilted, beneath shady kiawe trees next to the pond.

Several weeks after returning to the still-frozen Northeast, I have an abrupt change of heart. Call me superstitious, too. Cocooning the *menehune* in bubble wrap, I put him into a box addressed to Sharon and ship him home for good. He's there still, I imagine, perched on a chunk of lava next to a waterfall in her sunny garden. Every now and then, she assures me that he's happy at last. 

③ Meanwhile, heat the marinade in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thick and syrupy, about 20 minutes.

④ Using tongs, flip ribs and cook, basting frequently with the reduced marinade, until the ribs are browned, glazed, and tender, 15–20 minutes. Transfer ribs to a platter and garnish with scallions.

**Pairing notes** Carignane, a spicy red Rhône varietal, is a nice match for the sweet-tasting ribs. Lioco "Indica" Mendocino County Red Wine 2006, from California, is a good choice.



## HIJIKI NAMASU

Pickled Seaweed Salad

SERVES 6

This briny-sweet Japanese-style salad is based on one served at the Manago Hotel, in the Big Island town of Captain Cook.

- 1 2-oz. package dried seaweed, such as mehihiki (see "A Hawaiian Pantry Staple", far right)
- 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
- 3 tbsp. sugar

- 3 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. sesame seeds
- 2 tsp. Asian sesame oil
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 plum tomato, coarsely chopped

① Put seaweed into a sieve; rinse under cold water. Transfer seaweed to a bowl and cover with 6 cups cold water. Let soak until plump and soft, about 30 minutes. Drain seaweed and pat dry with paper towels. Transfer seaweed to a large bowl.

② Meanwhile, whisk together vinegar, sugar, soy sauce, sesame seeds, sesame oil, and salt in a bowl.

③ Add the soy mixture to seaweed; toss to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 3 hours or overnight to allow the flavors to meld. Divide salad between 6 small plates and garnish with onions and tomato.



## FRIED-RICE OMELETTE

SERVES 2

In this dish, a popular order at Teshima's, a restaurant in the Big Island

town of Kealahakua, a thin omelette is folded around a filling of fried rice and sausage. The cooks at Teshima's use linguica, a Portuguese-style sausage, but we found that easy-to-find kielbasa works just as well.

- 5 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/4 lb. kielbasa, chopped into small pieces
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 1 1/2 cups cooked short-grain rice
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. oyster sauce
- 4 eggs, beaten

① Heat 1 tbsp. butter in a 12" non-

stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage; brown for 6 minutes. Add onions and carrots; cook until golden, about 4 minutes. Add rice; cook, stirring, until hot, 3–4 minutes. Stir in soy and oyster sauces; set rice aside, covered.

② Heat 2 tbsp. butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Beat 2 eggs in a bowl; pour into the skillet and turn to coat bottom. Cook, swirling pan, until omelette sets but top is still slightly wet, about 1 minute. Arrange half the fried rice down center. Using a rubber spatula, slide omelette onto a plate; roll around filling. Repeat with remaining butter, eggs, and fried-rice mixture.

## A HAWAIIAN PANTRY STAPLE

Many different kinds of seaweed are harvested as food from the waters surrounding Hawaii's Big Island; sold both dried and fresh, these sea vegetables are used to give saltiness and depth to fish and other dishes and are also eaten on their own, often dressed with a vinaigrette, as a salad or side dish (see recipe, this page far left). Across the mainland United States, the seaweed most readily available is hijiki, a kind harvested mostly off the coast of Japan (see page 96 for a source). Fresh hijiki is maroon in color but turns darker as it dries; the hijiki you'll find in most Asian markets in this country has been dried and is sold in strands that soften and become tender when soaked in water. Once it is rehydrated, most dried hijiki has a mellow and not too briny flavor and a delicate texture and blends well with other foods in stir-fries and salads. Many Japanese food stores in this country carry two kinds of hijiki: nagahijiki, which comes from the stem of the plant, and mehihiki, which comes from the leaves. The recipe for hijiki salad shown at left calls for mehihiki, which consists of smaller, softer strands. To use dried hijiki, rinse the strands thoroughly, then soak them in water for 20 minutes until they're tender but not mushy. In soaking, the vegetable will quintuple in volume, so a little goes a long way. —Karen Shimizu





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# KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman

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## Ribs Revealed

Ribs are some of the most flavorful cuts on an animal. While tender pork baby backs are our choice for the glazed ribs on page 87, various rib cuts suit different recipes and cooking styles. Here's a guide to our favorite options.

—Georgia Freedman

**1 Pork Spare Ribs** This inexpensive cut comes from around the belly of the pig. Because belly meat is prized for bacon, spare-ribs are cut as close to the bone as possible.

**2 St. Louis-Style Ribs** These ribs, used in barbecue, are pork spareribs with a uniform, rectangular shape thanks to the removal of the end portion, or rib tip, and the skirt, a flap of meat attached to the bone side.

**3 Baby Back Pork Ribs** Baby backs are taken from around the loin, the muscle that runs along the pig's back on either side of the spine, for a leaner cut that cooks rapidly.

**4 English-Style Beef Short Ribs** Relatively tough beef short ribs, taken from the bottom of the rib cage, work best braised, as in the Hawaiian cowboy beef stew on page 86. The ones known as English style are cut parallel to the bone and separated from one another.

**5 Flanken-Cut Beef Short Ribs** This cut, used in eastern European Jewish soups and stews, comes from the same part of the steer as English-style ribs, but it's cut across the ribs into a thin slab containing several bones.

**6 Country-Style Pork Ribs** These, the meatiest of ribs, come either from the loin, in which case they cook quickly, or, more often, from near the shoulder, which means they're tougher and benefit from low, slow cooking.



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## KITCHEN

# Sweet Techniques

While making the tortes and cookies from "Vienna's Sweet Empire" (page 40) in the **SAVEUR** test kitchen, we used a few techniques that are helpful for any home baker to know. The six tricks below will produce sophisticated results with minimal effort in a multitude of desserts. —Ben Mims



Your method for **measuring flour** can make or break a recipe. We use a spoon to fluff the flour and transfer it to the measuring cup, then level it off by sweeping a knife across the top of the cup, making sure not to tap it or compact the contents. Using the measuring cup to scoop flour directly from its container will pack the flour in, increasing the weight by as much as an ounce or two, which can make for a dry, heavy cake.



To achieve **marbling**, as in the marmorgugelhupf cake on page 52, pour a layer of yellow batter into a cake mold, follow it with a layer of chocolate batter, and top it with the remaining yellow batter. Insert a table knife through the layers and twist back and forth, rotating the cake mold as you go. On a second rotation, repeatedly pull the knife up through the batter like an oar through water, twisting near the top to create swirls.



When **whisking up a meringue** from egg whites and sugar, aim for as much volume as possible; it will make for a better-aerated batter and a lighter cake. Whisking egg whites uncoils proteins, which then bond together to encase air bubbles in a foam. Sugar, added next, thickens and stabilizes the foam. To ensure that the sugar dissolves and that enough air is incorporated, continue whisking until stiff peaks adhere to the upturned whisk.



Many recipes for old-world cakes, such as the punschtorte on page 52, call for whisking egg yolks with sugar until a pale yellow foam forms. As the mixture is whisked, sugar dissolves in moisture present in the yolks, forming a syrup that traps air bubbles, which produce a light, spongelike texture in the cake. This is called **ribboning** because you can tell the foam is stable when it streams off the whisk in a long, unbroken ribbon.



When a recipe calls for chocolate to be chopped and melted, as in the trüffeltorte recipe on page 53, a fine, smooth chef's knife's blade might easily slip on the chocolate's hard, slick surface. A serrated blade, with large, gripping teeth, is safer and altogether better for **chopping chocolate**. The teeth produce delicate, fairly uniform shards, which melt faster and more smoothly than unevenly chopped chunks.



When **separating eggs**, it's crucial not to allow any yolk to escape into the white (which would hinder the latter's ability to whip into meringue). Start with a cold egg; it will separate more easily than a warm one. Crack it with one hand and ease the contents into the other hand, allowing the white to slip through barely separated fingers into a bowl. This way is gentler and more sanitary than pouring the egg between cracked shells.



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## KITCHEN

# Trimming Baby Artichokes



**U**nlike European baby artichokes, which are harvested young, the vegetables that go by that name in America are simply smaller artichokes harvested at the same time and from the same plants as bigger ones. Clustered low on the stalk, shaded by the jumbo bulbs at the crown of the plant, these “baby” artichokes grow into mature, if petite, bulbs that remain relatively tender. Larger artichokes, such as globes, have not only woody outer leaves but also a fibrous choke that must be removed and discarded (see page 72), while baby artichokes contain an edible choke (except those harvested very young, which have no choke at all). Both the American and the European baby versions are perfect for

simmering, as in our recipes for braised artichokes and for fettuccine with artichokes and chicken, both on page 75, or for sautéing, as in the skirt steak with artichoke and potato hash recipe on page 76.

They're also great in stir-fries and used raw in salads. And as the step-by-step guide on this page shows, these diminutive delights are exceptionally easy to trim and prepare for cooking. —Ben Mims

- 1 Using a serrated-blade knife, cut off the spiky top third of a baby artichoke and discard the trimmings.
- 2 Pull back each dark outer leaf and snap it off at the base until you reach the tender, pale green inner leaves.
- 3 Use a vegetable peeler to remove the tough outer layers around the stem until you reach the pale layer underneath.
- 4 Leave the stem attached. With a paring knife, cut off the tough bottom 1/4" of the stem.
- 5 Use the paring knife to trim any remaining dark green or tough parts around the edge and underside of the artichoke and stem until it is smooth and uniformly pale in color.
- 6 The cleaned baby artichoke with its edible choke intact can be rubbed with the cut side of a lemon half and used immediately or stored, refrigerated, for up to two days in four cups of water mixed with the juice of two lemons, which will prevent browning.



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# Stir Your Soul



This summer, spirits from around the world will descend on America's most soulful city as Tales of the Cocktail returns to New Orleans, July 8-12, 2009. Back for its seventh year, the premier festival of cocktails, cuisine and New Orleans culture is serving up another spirited series of seminars, dinners and parties held throughout the hallowed streets of the French Quarter. Be there as the best and brightest of the cocktail community share their secrets and insights on the artistry of cocktails, making Tales of the Cocktail the most spirited event of the summer yet again.

For information on this year's soul stirring good time, visit [TalesoftheCocktail.com](http://TalesoftheCocktail.com)

**SAVEUR**  *Hotel Monteleone*



## KITCHEN

## THE PANTRY

## A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,  
we discovered food products and  
destinations too good to keep to ourselves.  
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY HUNTER LEWIS

## Fare

To taste **pastéis de tentúgal**, visit O Afonso (Estrada Nacional 111, Tentúgal; 351/239-951-140) in central Portugal. You can order the St. George Spirits **Absinthe Verte** from Borisal Liquor & Wine (\$78 for a 750-ml bottle; 800/658-8149; www.drinkupny.com). Dine aboard the **Trans-Siberian Express**, which runs between Moscow and Vladivostok from February to September (44/0/161-928-9410; www.gwtravel.co.uk); the **Napa Valley Wine Train** (800/427-4124; www.winetrain.com); Canada's **VIA Rail Silver and Blue**, going from Vancouver to Toronto and back (888/842-7245; www.viarail.ca); the **Alaska Railroad Denali Star**, which runs between Anchorage and Fairbanks (800/544-0552; www.alaskarailroad.com); the **Strasburg Rail Road**, which offers Pennsylvania Dutch dinners (717/687-7522; www.strasburgrailroad.com); and the **Danube Express**, which runs from Brussels to Istanbul (44/0/146-244-1400; www.danube-express.com).

## Cellar

For Lompoc Wine Ghetto **wines**, contact Brewer-Clifton (805/735-9184; www.brewerclifton.com) for the Mount Carmel chardonnay; Fiddlehead Cellars (800/251-1225; www.fiddleheadcellars.com) for the Happy Canyon sauvignon blanc; Piedrasassi (805/637-1005; www.piedrasassi.com) for its syrah; Longoria Wines (866/759-4637; www.longoriawine.com) for the Sta. Rita Hills Fe Ciega Vineyard pinot noir; Palmina (805/735-2030; www.palminawines.com) for the Honea nebbiolo;

Samsara Wine (805/331-2292; www.samsara.wine.com) for the Melville Vineyard syrah; Sea Smoke (866/746-6866; www.seasmokecellars.com) for the "Southing" pinot noir; and Stolpman Vineyards (805/688-0400; www.stolpmanvineyards.com) for its sangiovese.

## Ingredient

To make the fried catfish, use catfish **filets** (\$54.00 for a 5-pound box; ask for "plain shank filets"), available from Heartland Catfish (662/254-7100; www.catfish.net). Sample delacata at Giardina's in Greenwood, Mississippi (314 Howard Street; 662/455.4227; www.thealluvian.com).

## Reporter

To try Neapolitan-style **pizza** in Calcutta, visit Fire and Ice (Kanak Building 41, J. L. Nehru Road, Calcutta, India; 91/33/2288-4073; www.fireandicepizzeria.com).

## Classic

For making goulash, use **sweet paprika** (\$4.79 for a 5-ounce tin; ask for "Szege Hungarian sweet paprika"), available at germanteli.com (877/437-6269; www.germanteli.com).

## Vienna

Visit the Demel New York outpost (1 West 58th Street; 212/572-0989; www.demel.at/en). To make punschtorte, use **pastry bags** (\$10.95 for 3 bags) and **pastry tips** (\$21.95 for a 12-piece set), available at Cooking.com (800/663-8810; www.cooking.com); **candied violets** **P** (\$12.50 for a 2-ounce bag), available at Market Hall Foods (888/952-4005; www.markethallfoods.com); and a culinary **butane mini-torch** **P** (\$39.60 for a torch without fuel), available at JB Prince (800/473-0577; www.jbprince.com). To make marmorgugelhupf, use a **gugelhupf mold** **P** (\$39.50 for a 1.5-quart, 8-inch mold; ask for "heavy kugelhupf mold"), available at JB Prince (see above). To make the Amadeus cookies, use **almond paste** (\$7.80 for a 7-ounce tube) from Oma's Pantry (800/656-1949; www.dcmimports.com). For these recipes, we used **Baker's Semi-Sweet Baking Chocolate**,

which has 54 percent cacao (available in all grocery stores in an 8-ounce box). For sweeter chocolate, try **Ghirardelli's Semi-Sweet Baking Bar** (\$3.50 for a 4-ounce bar; 35–45 percent cacao) from Ghirardelli (888/402-6262; www.ghirardelli.com). For a less sweet chocolate, try **Scharffen Berger's 62% Cacao Semi-sweet Baking Bar** (\$10 for a 9.7-ounce bar) from Scharffen Berger (800/930-4528; www.scharffenberger.com).

## Atlantic City

When in Atlantic City, visit **Angelo's Fairmount Tavern** (2300 Fairmount Avenue; 609/344-2439); **Chef Vola's** (111 South Albion Place; 609/345-2022); **Tony's Baltimore Grill** (2800 Atlantic Avenue; 609/345-5766); and **White House Sub Shop** (2301 Arctic Avenue; 609/345-8599).

## Artichokes

Contact Baroda Farms (805/736-6529; www.artichokes.net; prices and availability vary by season) for many of the artichokes found in the glossary. Order **ready-to-eat artichoke hearts** **P** from Monterey Farms (\$5.49 for a 6-ounce packet; ask for "ArtiHearts"; 831/393-1328; www.montereyfarmsartichokes.com). To make the greens and artichokes stew, use **ground sumac** (\$3.99 for a 2-ounce pack; ask for "sumac powder") from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com).

## Hawaii

To make the hijiki namasu, use **dried seaweed** **P** from Katagiri & Co. (212/755-3566; www.katagiri.com; ask for "hijiki dried"; \$1.69 for a 2-ounce package).

## Correction

Traditional Aceto Balsamico of Monticello, featured on page 82 of our January/February 2009 issue, has been aged since 1998 in casks made from acacia, ash, cherry, chestnut, juniper, and mulberry, in addition to oak.

*Items marked with **P** also appear, with photographs, in our Visual Pantry at [www.saveur.com/visualpantry118](http://www.saveur.com/visualpantry118).*



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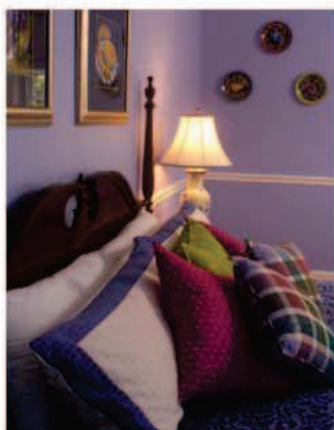


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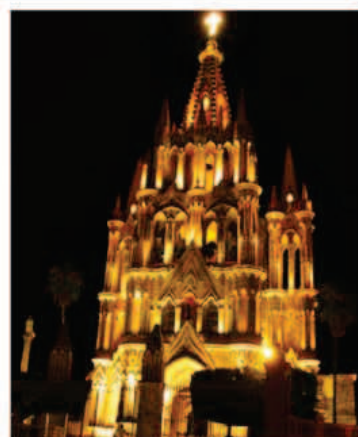
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He spent all morning  
 staring at a map of Paris.

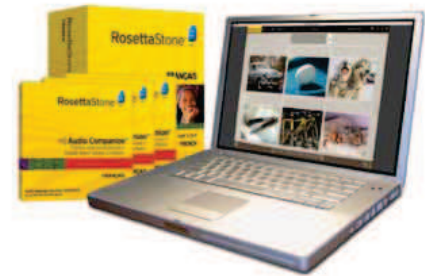
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# M O M E N T



**TIME** 7:00 P.M., November 19, 2008

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